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Are police body cameras pointless if the public can’t see the footage? BY JASON MCGAHAN.

How Los Angeles chefs are influenced by their abuelita’s cooking. BY SAMANTA HELOU.

L.A.’s virtual reality extravaganza returns, a priest blesses animals on Olvera Street, groovy Jesus visits the Echo Park Film Center on Easter and more to do and see in L.A. this week.

USC grad and former dominatrix Jenny Nordback recalls her years in an L.A. dungeon in vivid detail — maybe too vivid. BY TONY MOSTROM. In ART PICKS, one artist screens her sexually explicit videos near Chinatown, and two others explore female archetypes in Hollywood. In STAGE, Lord of the Underworld’s Home for Unwed Mothers deals with reproductive rights, and Supper is not about the Koch brothers.

APRIL WOLFE visits a wolf sanctuary that’s helping veterans and is the subject of documentary The War in Between, and BILGE EBIRI reviews The Lost City of Z, plus Terence Davies’ Emily Dickinson take A Quiet Passion and other movies OPENING THIS WEEK, and YOUR WEEKLY MOVIE TO-DOS LIST.

It’s Coachella time: Music editor ANDY HERMANN picks his top 10 must-see acts, and JEFF WEISS offers some bold predictions (with Vegas-style odds) on who this year’s surprise guests will be. Plus: HENRY ROLLINS: THE COLUMNIST, listings for ROCK & POP, JAZZ & CLASSICAL and more.

Will the marijuana industry save the struggling town of Adelanto? BY ALEX HALPERIN.
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THE POLITICS OF BODY CAMERAS

Are police body cameras pointless if the public can’t see the footage?

BY JASON MCGAHAN

The Los Angeles Police Department's policy on body cameras is anything but transparent. L.A. became the largest U.S. city to use the devices when it unveiled a plan to equip 7,000 officers with body cameras in 2015. It sounded promising at the time.

But LAPD does not release footage of officer-involved shootings or other “critical incidents” without a court order. And in several recent officer-involved shootings — including one of a teenager in Boyle Heights — the officers didn't even turn the cameras on until the shooting was over.

Of course, the chief of police has the authority to override the restrictions and release footage, or some part of it, of a particular incident — which means the cameras operate less as a device for transparency and more as a tool for protecting the LAPD, according to Melanie Ochoa, staff attorney with the ACLU of Southern California.

“The police] withhold video in the vast majority of cases and release bits and pieces if it furthers their narrative,” Ochoa says.

When a divided Police Commission passed LAPD's current body-camera policy in 2015, the ACLU of Southern California publicly withdrew its support, arguing the policy undermines the spirit of body cameras.

But L.A.'s policy might be changing to make the whole point of the body cameras less, well, pointless.

The Los Angeles Police Commission is asking the public for feedback as it considers changes to the policy. The initiative is being led by Matt M. Johnson, president of the Los Angeles Police Commission, who says it’s part of a plan to increase transparency and accountability in the police department.

“The public's demand to see this footage, and the reaction to it, made me start looking at our current policy and to reconsider if it made sense in this environment,” says Johnson, who was appointed president of the commission in 2015 by Mayor Eric Garcetti.

Craig Lally, president of the Los Angeles Police Protective League, the union that represents L.A. police officers, says he opposes changing the current policy.

“The problem with Mr. Johnson is he’s coming in after we already agreed upon a policy,” Lally says. “We can’t be going down this road every time a new commissioner comes into place. There will be no end in sight.”

Lally says a change in policy that leads to public release of body-camera footage could prejudice the public against an officer. “Who’s going to determine what does and doesn’t get released?” he asks.

“It could interject politics and interfere with an independent investigation.”

[THE POLICE] WITHHOLD VIDEO IN THE VAST MAJORITY OF CASES AND RELEASE BITS AND PIECES IF IT FURTHERS THEIR NARRATIVE.

—MELANIE OCHOA, STAFF ATTORNEY, ACLU OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

As a first step to changing the policy, Johnson is encouraging members of the public to complete an online survey about what ought to happen when a body camera records an officer-involved shooting. Johnson says the commission will report on the results of the survey this summer, and that he aims to have a new policy in place by September.

The survey is being conducted this month by an NYU School of Law program known as the Policing Project, which has provided similar services to the NYPD and the police in Camden, New Jersey. Maria Ponomarenko, deputy director of the Policing Project, says of the survey: “It’s been a little bit of a slow start. We are actually somewhat puzzled as to why.”

Ponomarenko says the vast majority of police departments don’t have policies for release of video, or have a blanket policy of not releasing it unless there has been a court order.

There are exceptions. In Chicago, video of an officer-involved shooting must be made public within 60 days, and in Las Vegas it must be made public within 10 days. The San Diego County prosecutor’s office orders police departments to wait to make a video public until after it has completed its investigation and decided not to bring criminal charges, or until the conclusion of the case if it goes to trial.

For the majority of local police departments in the country, however, there is no policy, and the release of video happens on a case-by-case basis.

“What often happens around the country is they release video under local pressure,” Ponomarenko says, “and then find themselves in the position of having to justify why in this case and not another.”

The policy on body cameras has drawn renewed criticism in recent months amid reports of on-duty officers not activating the cameras prior to using deadly force. A recent report in the Los Angeles Times found that officers had failed to activate the cameras in at least four officer-involved shootings since 2015.

In February 2016, LAPD officers shot and killed 16-year-old José Mendez after the teen, who allegedly was driving a stolen car, pointed a sawed-off shotgun at an officer. Police Chief Charlie Beck later reported that the officers involved had delayed turning on their cameras until after the shooting occurred.

Arnoldo Casillas, the attorney representing the Mendez family in a lawsuit against the department, says that by not turning on their cameras, the officers essentially lost of a key piece of evidence.

“There is a failure of LAPD officers to meaningfully participate in the video program,” Casillas says. “There appears to be a culture within the LAPD that refuses to accept outside monitoring of their policing activities.”
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In the dusty, Joshua tree–speckled desert of southeastern San Bernardino County, the town of Adelanto almost blends into the landscape with its unlovely grid of colorless, low-slung buildings. The remote town was founded in 1915 by Earl Richardson, who is best known for inventing the toaster and an electric iron. Much like the nearby colony of Llano Del Rio — the failed Antelope Valley utopian commune that existed from 1914 to 1918 — Adelanto was intended to be one of Southern California’s prototypical planned communi-

ties. It was home to orchards and farms. But after the George Air Force Base — a large employer since it opened in the 1940s — shuttered in 1992, the city never recovered.

Today, Adelanto’s population is around 33,000. It is 50 percent Latino and 30 percent African-American, and roughly 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Adelanto’s first prison opened in 1991, and since then it’s been known — to the extent that it’s known at all — as a prison city. The for-profit prison company GEO Group has opened facilities there, housing more than 3,000 inmates. Last year, Adelanto reportedly collected only $160,000 annually from these businesses. On a desolate inbound road, a welcoming sign calls Adelanto “the city with unlimited possibilities.” Beneath the slogan are badges for Rotary International, the city’s Chamber of Commerce (founded in 1956), and the American Legion. There’s also a new logo on the sign, for the Adelanto Growers Association, a marijuana industry group striving to revive the city’s fortunes.

When Mayor Rich Kerr was elected in November 2014, he says Adelanto was “$2.6 million in the hole.” A year later, the Elementary school district superintendent, but in November 2015 Adelanto became one of the few California cities to allow medical marijuana growing on an industrial scale. “We had a city to save,” City Councilman John “Bug” Woodard Jr. says. In 2015, there were still relatively few cities where a business could acquire land and legally start a commercial marijuana farm. Desert Hot Springs, another depressed desert town, in 2014 became the first Southern California city to allow large pot farms. Recently, it’s seen large-scale opera-

ions move to town, tapping into the underground aquifers that give the town its name. Other desert cities are considering the marijuana option, too.

Adelanto is still a sleepy place, but it appears to be on the cusp of becoming a boomtown. In the previous 15 years, the town had added only two new Dollar Stores, according to Kerr, which earned the city $7,000 a year. But by allowing commercial marijuana growing, Adelanto ignited a land rush. Plots that had been worth $300,000 suddenly sold for $3 million, according to Sayegh, who rep-

to working-class populations that have been left behind. And marijuana is a rare opportunity to create thousands of well-paid jobs for workers without college degrees.

When California voters legalized recreational marijuana in November, they set the stage for an economic bonanza. Eight states have fully legalized pot, and 29 allow medical use, but as the world’s largest legal market, California is likely to define legal weed’s structure and culture globally, much as Silicon Valley and Hollywood do for their respective industries.

According to Arcview Market Research, last year in North America, legal
Los Angeles Marijuana Guide

The warehouses in Adelanto’s industrial area betray little of what’s inside. Adelanto’s prisons resemble all the other warehouses but are surrounded by fences topped with cyclone razor wire. Driving around town in an enormous white pickup, Sammy Sayegh — brother to Freddy, the lawyer who helped convince Adelanto to allow commercial growing — points out a building that makes specialized cars for movies, “like the Batmobile,” he says. While some businesses will stay, he says many have found the buyout offers from growers irresistible.

He drives past a factory where the defense company General Atomics makes Predator drones. Kerr says the company is “all for Adelanto,” though he says it doesn’t support marijuana growing. (General Atomics declined L.A. Weekly’s request for comment.) Woodard says he’d like to see the company show off one of the drones, which are 27 feet long and have wingspans twice as wide. For events such as the rodeo, he says, “We’ll turn it into a parade float.”

Sammy Sayegh, who’s head of the growing company California Biotechnology Center and a board member of the Adelanto Growers Association, moved to the high desert to oversee construction on his company’s grow. A general contractor by profession, he dwells on the details as he points out the big silver rolls of insulation and water trenches in the floor of his under-construction facility. He’s even planning for earthquakes in this city not too distant from the San Andreas Fault. “If a million dollars’ worth of lights hits the floor, we got a problem.” Some of his crop will be sold under a brand developed by one of his brother Freddy’s clients, reggae singer Ky-Mani Marley, through a licensing deal.

The industry has contributed to local charities with food drives, but, more important, the city recognizes the new opportunities pot growing brings to Adelanto. Sammy Sayegh says old women mischievously ask him if the medicine will help with their knees. “We’re like little folk heroes to the community.”

Adelanto’s Mayor Pro Tem, Jermaine Wright Sr., owns the Fat Boyz Grill sandwich shop. A retired pastor, he was a reluctant marijuana supporter. “It had to be biblically sound for me to do anything,” he says. Eventually he made his peace with it, though he’s still “not anywhere close to saying recreational is fine.”

“WE’RE LIKE LITTLE FOLK HEROES TO THE COMMUNITY.”

—SAMMY SAYEGH

Legal marijuana growing operations at High Desert Cultivation

Councilman John “Bug” Woodard Jr. at the 630-acre, $60 million Adelanto site being developed by Industrial Integrity Solutions for eventual lease to marijuana entrepreneurs

> 17 > weed sales reached $6.7 billion. By 2021, that figure is expected to triple, with California leading the growth. Paired with the destigmatization of cannabis use — a 2016 study by the Pew Research Center found that 57 percent of U.S. adults say the use of marijuana should be made legal — California has the recipe for a major economic engine. Barring federal intervention by President Trump’s attorney general, Jeff Sessions, the state’s future is green.

Supporters argue that legalization will shift control of the marijuana market from violent criminal cartels to law-abiding businesses that pay taxes and create jobs. There’s already evidence from Colorado and other states that legal weed has benefited state economies.

A struggling town such as Adelanto has an incentive to bet its future on marijuana. But for a nascent industry encumbered by pot’s legal baggage, what happens over the next few years in Adelanto, and other down-on-their-luck California cities counting on cannabis, will have broad implications for the industry’s future. The fate of Adelanto will help determine whether the green rush is another boom-and-bust California dream, or an industry that’s sustainable for decades.

Adelanto’s Starbucks is in the corner of a modest strip mall complex. On a recent morning, Mayor Kerr and Councilman Woodard, his political ally, held court on the patio outside, chatting with locals who passed by.

Kerr is a 22-year Marine veteran who has a business installing telecom systems for Motorola. His mayoral campaign was the first time he’d run for office. He sweats constantly and smokes off-brand cigarettes. In January, he punctured a lung and broke some ribs and his collarbone in a dirt biking accident. He’s 60 years old.

Woodard is in real estate and printing, the latter of which helped when he self-financed his $700 City Council campaign. With his longish hair and biker mustache, he resembles singer David Crosby. Woodard says they are both “very conservative Republicans.” They receive small stipends for their government roles.

Kerr and Woodard won election in 2014, shaking up the local order. Woodard ran opposing a new prison, though he told the Victorville Daily Press, “I’m not totally against it. But what I imagine is people build prisons to oversee construction on their company’s grow. A general contractor by profession, he dwells on the details as he points out the big silver rolls of insulation and water trenches in the floor of his under-construction facility. He’s even planning for earthquakes in this city not too distant from the San Andreas Fault. “If a million dollars’ worth of lights hits the floor, we got a problem.” Some of his crop will be sold under a brand developed by one of his brother Freddy’s clients, reggae singer Ky-Mani Marley, through a licensing deal.

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A big, bald African-American man, he sits behind the lunch counter on a quiet afternoon. Indicating two men in a booth, he says, “They’re high. They’ve got the munchies. I’m making money.”

He maintains that Adelanto is “not a weed city, we’re a city that’s found a legal mechanism to generate much-needed funds.”

For a place like Adelanto, the rationale for becoming a pot town is straightforward. Endless demand for marijuana can fund the city’s growth and create solid middle-class jobs. This new industry can pay twice what fast-food jobs pay, Mayor Kerr says. He says his constituents “don’t even know what $15 an hour is.” While the industry still carries a reputation — even Kerr says, “Our city’s not down with the free use of it” — growing appears to be low-impact compared to other boombtown industries such as fracking.

Adelanto’s boosters tell the story of marijuana arriving in Adelanto as the kind of blue-collar revival Americans are so hungry for. But it’s still far too early to know what a weed boom will mean for small towns.

In 2015, Turk McBride, a former NFL defensive end who lives in Riverside, applied for an Adelanto growing license. He received one and is now CEO of a growing company called Global Research Ventures.

McBride, 31, isn’t new to cannabis. He credits it for the relative longevity of his journeyman, six-season pro career, which ended before the 2013 season. In the NFL, cannabis users are “almost like a secret society,” he says. Now McBride says medical marijuana helps with mood swings, dizziness and other reminders of his pro football days. Medical marijuana has been discussed more openly in football circles of late, as some believe marijuana is a safer alternative to players’ painkiller regimens. McBride, who expects his 90,000-square-foot building to be growing plants by the fall, says he thinks he’s one of the few African-Americans to have a grower’s license in Adelanto.

“I don’t want to be greedy,” Kerr says, but he’d like Adelanto to grow 20 percent of California’s pot supply. That would amount to roughly a $1.5 billion crop by 2020, more than the state of Colorado consumed last year.

In the scenario Woodard and Kerr envision, marijuana taxes build schools, parks and infrastructure while cannabis workers re-establish the city’s economic base.

But success for Adelanto isn’t a sure thing. There’s the threat that when vast grows come online, they will glut the California market and cause a price collapse. If that happens, cities like Adelanto, which bet everything on weed, could be forced to undercut one another to keep companies from leaving.

If that “race-to-the-bottom” scenario plays out as it has in so many other industries, Americans soon could be importing their weed from China.

Adelanto is defined by its past; it’s a former orchard, a former Air Force city. If the town leaders aren’t careful, Adelanto could become a former weed city. But at the moment, there’s reason for optimism. As the marijuana industry moves into town, Adelanto may have control over its future. “The good Lord was looking out for the city of Adelanto,” Woodard says.
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t was a bittersweet day for the cannabis industry in Los Angeles. On the evening of Nov. 8, 2016, at around 9 p.m. there were yelps of delight and group hugs among a crowd of marijuana business owners in a Santa Monica bar, as news spread about the passage of Proposition 64, legalizing the recreational use of cannabis among Californians over the age of 21. But shortly thereafter, anxiety about the future of the cannabis industry started to trickle in along with votes for Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump.

Ten days after Trump was elected president, he nominated Alabama senator and marijuana opponent Jeff Sessions to run the Department of Justice, causing pervasive trepidation among cannabis stakeholders in L.A. about how to proceed. “When it comes to feeling protected in the cannabis industry, we don’t — not many people do,” says Kristen Yoder, a partner at LIV Consulting, a management consulting company for cannabis businesses.

Yoder, who has been in the L.A. cannabis industry for more than a decade, says she now is recommending to clients that they apply for a medical, rather than recreational, marijuana business license through the state of California. Jonathan Caulkins, Carnegie Mellon University public policy professor, calls this decision a “no-brainer.” He says Sessions and Trump have “clearly indicated that they see a distinction” between the medical and recreational use of cannabis, with the former warranting protections that the latter does not.

Yet Caulkins warns that Angelenos shouldn’t assume that businesses providing marijuana to anyone who feigns a medical condition will be respected by the federal government. Anyone who knows anything about cannabis, he says, knows California’s medical cannabis industry is a “Trojan horse for quasi-legalization.” Trump and Sessions could easily ask Congress to close this loophole.

These sorts of uncertainties have caused some hesitation among investors who were banking on a recreational cannabis boom in California, but, for the most part, it seems as though there’s still a growing interest in the state’s marijuana industry. “You have seen some pullback,” says Richard Medina, chief operational officer at Latinos for Cannabis. “But you still have a lot of Wall Street-type money looking at this space.” Medina, who works with minority-owned cannabis businesses in Los Angeles, has recruited a dozen cannabis investors since Trump was elected.

Local cannabis business owners express concern about Sessions but also seem to be moving forward. “I’m looking, I’m waiting, but I’m just running business as usual,” says Mikal Pradia, founder of Los An-
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Some marijuana lobbyists in Washington, D.C., speculate that this is the right business move. On April 28, a spending bill that includes an amendment preventing the Justice Department from interfering with states’ medical marijuana programs will be up for renewal. Robert Capecchi, director of federal policies at the Marijuana Policy Project, says he expects this amendment, or a similar one, to pass. If people are exploring investment opportunities in the cannabis industry, he says, “There’s nothing at this point to stop them.”

Ultimately, federal interference will be largely dependent upon what resources Sessions decides he wants to invest in regulating cannabis. The Department of Justice has yet to make its priorities clear. Caulkins says that with current federal law Sessions could “shut down the recreational cannabis market overnight,” but he could also just decide to do nothing in order to focus on issues such as immigration.

Cannabis industry experts agree that regardless of what happens, it’s essential that cities and states flesh out their regulations if they want to help protect local businesses from the federal government. The recent passage of Measure M, which allows L.A. City Council to license and regulate marijuana businesses, was an important step. But the city still has to work out a number of specifics, including how many of the hundreds of dispensaries currently operating in Los Angeles should be legalized.

“It doesn’t seem like uncertainty about Sessions is changing how the city of Los Angeles moves forward,” says LIV Consulting founder Simone Cimiluca-Radzins. “They don’t have a lot of time, and it seems like they’re being very proactive.”

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YOUR GUIDE TO 420 FESTIVITIES
HIKE, DO YOGA, WATCH A MOVIE OR LISTEN TO SNOOP

stoners have a lot to celebrate this year. California legalized recreational weed in November, which means as of now, it’s legal for adults 21 or older to puff, puff, pass — but only on private property. It’s illegal to smoke, vape or consume weed in public, with a few exceptions for private events that are specifically licensed to allow it.

Hopes are high for the future of marijuana, and there are plenty of opportunities to celebrate on the upcoming 420 holiday. From movie screenings to music, comedy shows and yoga, here’s a bunch of ways to ring in the first year of legalized pot on April 20.

Pete Holmes and the Leafly Comedy Tour, Regent Theater
While not your traditional stoner soiree, what better way to spend the designated day-o’-highness than laughing your ass off. Put on by cannabis company Leafly, this night of comedy includes Brandon Wardell, Jade Catta Preta and headliner Pete Holmes, of the You Made It Weird podcast and late-night TV’s The Pete Holmes Show. Tickets cost a suitable $420, and all proceeds go toward Marley Natural’s Rise Up initiative, created to champion the Bob Marley way of social justice, environmentalism and social change. Rise Up will donate the money to the Minority Cannabis Business Association, a nonprofit focused on increasing diversity in the marijuana industry.

HIGH’KE to BURN “Calories,” Echo Mountain Trailhead
Kill two birds with one stone by getting your daily exercise in while also celebrating the high holiday. Orchestrated by Daylee Smoker, the hike kicks off at 9 a.m. at Charles Farnsworth Park in Altadena, where “high-kers” will stretch, hydrate and get the low-down on the approximately three-hour adventure. They’ll also have a chance to buy $10 grams of weed prior to setting off on the Echo Mountain Mount Lowe Trail. The trek will include a 2.5-mile hike to a scenic picnic area with a view of the L.A. Basin. Here, hikers can refuel with granola bars, prerolled joints and bottles of water. RSVP is required and tickets are $15.

Cannabis Cup, National Orange Show
The Holy Grail of 420 activities, this three-day event features everything you could possibly want from a weed celebration. Kicking off Friday, April 21, and running through the weekend, the Cannabis Cup includes an Edibles Village, a Top Chef-style cannabis cooking competition, live grow room and even a topical massage spa. There will, of course, be a litany of weed vendors on site, plus seminars, a food court and doctors ready to “consult” with non-card-carrying attendees. This year’s event also features a lineup of big-name musical guests: Wu-Tang Clan, The Game, Nas, Damian “Jr. Gong” Marley and Method Man & Redman. One-day passes start at $50.

Snoop Dogg, Cypress Hill & Wiz Khalifa, Greek Theatre
While not billed as a “420” event, this April 20 concert features hip-hop classics who not only like to sing about weed but are known to be big fans of consuming it. In fact, Wiz Khalifa has his own strain of weed — Khalifa Kush aka Wiz Khalifa O.G. — and a YouTube series subtitled “Wiz Khalifa Smoking Weed.” Cypress Hill, longtime advocates for cannabis legalization, now have their hands deep in the industry with their own chocolate edibles business. And Snoop is, well ... he’s Snoop. When the weed website Herb published “15 Infamous Songs About Smoking Weed,” Snoop songs claimed four of the spots. Tickets start at $30 and the concert begins at 7:30 p.m.

Dub Club 420 Party, Echoplex
Although Dub Club is a weekly reggae party at the Echo Park venue — and each Wednesday its own mini-420 celebration — the April 19 iteration will have special guests including Jamaican dub musician Jesse Royal and U.K. reggae band Black Slate. Tickets $15 in advance, $20 at the door; ages 21 and older.

Levitate Yoga, secret Venice location
Starting at 7 p.m., this private event — with the tagline “Come with a yoga mat, leave with a new perspective” — encourages 420 revelers to connect with their spiritual side. In addition to yoga, the evening party includes live entertainment and a spiritual tea ceremony. There will be “edibles, topicals and smokables,” and guests are asked to bring water and a yoga mat and wear comfortable clothes. Medical cards will be checked at the door and the location will be released three days before the event. Tickets are $40 but the Nirvana VIP Pass, $95, gets you all types of extra swag, including a take-home yoga mat and weed-heavy gift bag.

Half Baked screening, the Wiltern
Written by Dave Chappelle and Dave Chappelle Show co-creator Neal Brennan, Half Baked includes everything you’d expect from a late-’90s stoner flick: an abundance of tie-dye, supersize bongs and appearances by pot pillars like Willie Nelson and Tommy Chong. The 21-and-over show starts at 7 p.m. Tickets cost the to-be-expected $420, but the $1420 VIP ticket gets you popcorn, line-skipping privileges and reserved seating. Side note: David Crosby is performing at the Wiltern the night before — a fitting way to celebrate 420 a day early.

420 Fest, Belasco Theater
A more traditional stoner fest, this all-night party that goes until 4 a.m. is actually on Saturday, April 22. This 18-and-over party includes a lineup of more than 30 DJs and artists on four stages, including a “Temple of Trance.” Tickets are $20 but you can ball out with bottle service if you choose. —Hayley Fox

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Smoking weed and playing video games is a time-honored tradition. From Seth Rogen taking and toggling in nearly every bromance movie to High Times releasing a list last year of the 22 greatest stoner video games of all time, these two sedentary activities are a perfect match.

Now, one entrepreneur is aiming to crank this mind-bending combination up a notch with a carefully curated selection of cannabis and virtual reality. Dan Braunstein, founder of fine dining and events company Grassfed, says marijuana enhances all of the senses, which serves to intensify the already immersive VR experience.

"Cannabis and gaming were always good friends, if you will," Braunstein says. "I know many of my friends that love gaming, and love cannabis, and love to combine both of them."

The virtual reality gaming industry is thriving right here in Los Angeles. By 2022, the VR business as a whole could be worth almost $34 billion, according to one estimate, with a large portion of this coming through Los Angeles. The local industry has gotten so prolific that the concentration of tech companies and startups on the Westside has been dubbed Silicon Beach, the SoCal outpost of Silicon Valley. Later this month, co-working space Upload is opening a 20,000-square-foot shared space in Venice, which will host more than 100 virtual and augmented reality companies and freelancers.

In addition to L.A.'s growing virtual reality market, the cannabis industry at large has begun to embrace virtual reality for both its marketing capabilities and inherently psychedelic properties. VR has been used to help materialize the effects of certain weed strains, and has even been employed by cannabis businesses across the country to provide customers with a behind-the-scenes view of grow operations. For example, on Kush Tourism’s website, visitors can take a 360-degree look at Dawg Star Cannabis in Seattle, getting so close to the cannabis you can almost smell it. Virtual reality has even been used by the National Institute on Drug Abuse to measure how THC impairs drivers and to what extent.

Braunstein’s new foray into virtual reality launches Friday at an undisclosed loft location in downtown L.A., where he’ll be putting on his second ganja and gaming event for 50 to 60 people. For $45 a head, gamers can sample edibles, space out to a funky, hip-hop-filled playlist and dive into the realm of virtual reality. With nearly 150 different scenarios to choose from, guests can do anything from visit an arcade or amusement park, to travel to the Great Wall of China or hunt zombies.

“I can tell you that many people actually prefer the zombies game. They want to feel inside this world, they want to be scared,” Braunstein says. “I thought that only guys liked to kill zombies, but apparently I was wrong.”

Braunstein, a musician and music supervisor, moved to the United States from Israel about nine years ago. After working as a diplomat for five years and for a nonprofit that helped bring Israeli musicians and comedians to the States, Braunstein began organizing cannabis-infused dinners for friends and family in October 2016. Combining his musical expertise with the culinary prowess of professional chefs, Braunstein officially launched Grassfed a little more than two months ago.

Much as a sommelier pairs wine with food, Braunstein instead pairs music with meals. His previous themed dinners have included a soul food spread accompanied by funk and soul music; a Mediterranean night accompanied by Greek tunes; and even a Woodstock party, where attendees vibed to sounds of the epic, late-’60s party while eating vegetarian food.

“The overall goal is to become the go-to platform for private and corporate cannabis events,” he says. “And I see the demand coming very quickly.”

For Braunstein, virtual reality parties, cannabis dinners and weed-driven social events are mostly tools to stay connected to the cannabis industry at large and to build Grassfed’s clientele, while Braunstein establishes himself as a high-end party provider. Eventually, he’d like to rent vaporizers for special events, be the go-to guy for cannabis chocolate bars and cocktail stations, and cater weddings, bachelorette parties and every other private event in between.

As Los Angeles heads toward complete marijuana legalization in 2018, Braunstein says getting busted by law enforcement is still a concern. Although Grassfed is “operating in a legal space” and requires guests to have a medical recommendation, there’s still quite a bit of gray area, Braunstein says, which is why the address of his parties isn’t distributed until 24 hours before the event.

Braunstein, like many in the cannabis industry, balances on a precarious structure of legal intricacies, such as having cannabis products donated to the event and then charging guests to access the party, not for the weed.

“I’m not buying the cannabis. I’m getting it for free, and we are gifting it to our guests,” he says. “If you ask my lawyer, we are 100 percent legal.”
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Meanwhile, Los Angeles voters finally said yes to fully legalizing marijuana dispensaries in town.

In the March 7 election, Measure M passed with a whopping 79 percent in favor.

The law, spearheaded by City Council president Herb Wesson, empowers the council to issue licenses to collectives, with priority given to the 135 or so medical marijuana dispensaries that are compliant under current law. It also allows the council to expand the number of weed retailers (paving the way for recreational shops, which state law will begin allowing next year); open the door to delivery; permit cultivators and edibles makers; tax pot enterprises; and shut down scofflaws with the help of increased penalties.

Supporters of Measure M say the hardest work lies ahead. That includes figuring out how many dispensaries beyond the 135 should be legalized, whether to allow delivery apps like Speed Weed to operate within city limits and how to regulate growers.

Members of the United Cannabis Business Alliance (UCBA), a group that represents a majority of them, decided, "All that needs to be given to the 135 or so medical marijuana dispensaries that are compliant under current law. It also allows the council to expand the number of weed retailers (paving the way for recreational shops, which state law will begin allowing next year); open the door to delivery; permit cultivators and edibles makers; tax pot enterprises; and shut down scofflaws with the help of increased penalties.

Members of the Southern California Coalition, a collective of marijuana businesses and advocates that was the main backer of Measure M in addition to City Hall, want the free market to decide how many pot shops should be allowed in L.A. "You should have zoning and land use and the free market dictate what the numbers are," says Adam Spiker, the group’s executive director.

Spiker estimates that there are as many as 1,700 pot shops in the city today, the vast majority of them illegal. Some of those illegal shops should not be granted permits, he says, but others have tried to abide by the law and should be allowed to exist under the new regulations.

Members of the United Cannabis Business Alliance (UCBA), a group that represents a good slice of the 135 quasi-legal dispensaries, have favored more limited expansion of weed retailers. UCBA president Jerred Kiloh says permitting a total of 300 — more than double the number of dispensaries currently tolerated by City Hall — is more like it.

"Based on the demographics, we feel the market is larger and more densely populated" than the current 135 legit shops are prepared to handle, Kiloh says. Meanwhile, Gov. Jerry Brown revealed a proposal last week to simplify statewide rules that govern medical and recreational marijuana sales and production. The proposal, if approved by the Legislature, would make it easier to start a pot business in the California.

Under the proposal, only state licenses would be required for marijuana businesses, unless local municipalities opt to require local licenses as well. "L.A. can decide to do its own licensing," DPA staff attorney Jolene Forman says. "It’s just not mandated."

The governor’s proposal also favored the licensing of smaller “microbusinesses” by streamlining the permitting process to ensure a broader array of would-be pot entrepreneurs has an opportunity to get in on the green rush.

"Somebody could grow small amounts of marijuana, process in small quantities and sell it in their own retail store," Forman says. "This decreases barriers to entry for smaller businesses. It would also allow more diversity in the market."

"Brown’s administration has designed a tight, comprehensive regulatory framework that protects consumers, workers, public health, the environment and small business stakeholders, while ensuring an inclusionary framework that opens up access for low-income people and communities of color," Lynne Lyman, state director of the Drug Policy Alliance, said in a statement.

Kiloh says there are probably a few thousand cultivators in town, with most of them likely to vie for a local license. Each permit could require an alcohol-style licensing process that includes a public hearing. On top of that, Building & Safety officials would have to figure out what a proper cultivation setup looks like. "All that needs to be decided," Kiloh says.

While draft regulations already have been circulating among marijuana business groups, under Measure M the city must have its rules and regulations up and running by Sept. 30. The Rules, Elections, Intergovernmental Relations and Neighborhoods Committee recommended that applications for pot business licenses be made available by Sept. 1.

"We take that [March 7] vote very, very seriously," Spiker says. "The folks who did vote gave us a mandate to get cannabis right in the city of L.A.”
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The beans are cooked to perfection, reaching a creamy consistency while retaining their starchy bite. The flavors of her beloved herbs — big-eared oregano from her garden, avocado tree leaves — merge in every spoonful. There’s no greater comfort than sitting there and listening to her stories while eating the frijoles we’ve been eating since childhood.

My abuelita’s primary form of communicating her love has always been through her food. She tells us her story through her dishes, and in doing so she sheds light on our own history both as Mexicans and as women. By recounting stories and recipes, she reveals a greater history of the land we come from and the vast influences present in each dish she cooks. Each bite makes a transnational history come alive; there’s the olive oil she uses in her peanut salsa, brought on ships from Spain; African plantains — first brought to Mexico during the slave trade — color her lentils; and indigenous epazote brings an herbal kick to her stews.

These poignant connections to our grandmothers play a significant role in sparking an interest in food, especially for food professionals. Abuelitas are revered by many chefs because, as chef Gilberto Cetina Jr. of Chichén Itzá says, “They created our flavor memories.” In an industry as male-dominated as food service, it is important to honor these inspirational women who often directly introduced chefs to their love of cooking for others.

Sitting outside his renowned Yucatán-style Mexican restaurant, Cetina recalls hearing about his abuelita’s fondita in the small town of Tizimin, Yucatán.

“She pushed us and she led us with her food. She would bring in the beans from her garden, avocado tree leaves — merge in every spoonful. There’s no greater comfort than sitting there and listening to her stories while eating the frijoles we’ve been eating since childhood.”

—JUAN ANTONIO

“In Oaxaca, back in the day, there weren’t many modes of transport, so my grandparents used burros and carts and they went walking to the neighboring towns to sell their products.”

He remembers his hometown of Tlacolula de Matamoros in the Mexican state of Oaxaca, where his grandmother taught him to make this family delicacy. “In Oaxaca, back in the day, there weren’t many modes of transport, so my grandparents used burros and carts and they went walking to the neighboring towns to sell their products.”

When he migrated to the United States, a fellow Oaxacan asked him to make his signature leche quemada ice cream for a family party. The ice cream was a hit, and Antonio realized he should use the legacy of knowledge his grandmother left him.

He started selling his ice cream on weekends door-to-door with his wife and children, while maintaining a restaurant job during the week. As his ice cream grew in popularity, he dedicated himself to it full-time and opened Oaxacalifornia, a stand that specializes in this vast array of ice cream flavors made just as his abuela taught him.

He feels he owes his success to his grandmother, who instilled in him a business sense and taught him to make his specialty. “When I first started as a kid, I used to get embarrassed selling,” Antonio says. “But she pushed us and she led us with her example. She talked to the people and served them, and it was a valuable lesson for me.

“Abuelitas are pillars of where we come from. We always carry them in our hearts and remember them.”

—JUAN ANTONIO

“Abuelitas are pillars of where we come from. We always carry them in our hearts and remember them,” he says. Raul Morales, chef of Taqueria Vista Hermosa, a food stand that specializes in al pastor—style meat, experienced a similar connection with his mother who instilled in him a business sense.

He recalls his grandmother in
her humble outdoor kitchen made of clay and brick. She would cook everything by hand atop her wood-burning stove — smoke would fill the air, but he didn’t mind. “I remember it being really small because my grandma was very short. She always had masa, molcajete, tomatoes roasting on her stove, and she always had chilies,” Morales reminisces. He would watch in awe as she prepared moles, corundas (the Michoacán-style tamal), and one of his favorite dishes: rajas, a roasted chile, tomato, onion and epazote stew typically eaten in tortillas like a taco. Morales remembers his abuela’s hands cleaning the chili without a knife. “I used to say, ‘Grandma, you’re going to burn your hands,’ and she would say, ‘No, no, I’m fine.’”

Watching his grandmother prepare this simple but flavorful dish made a lasting impression on Morales. “She made very humble dishes but made things with a lot of love, flavor and passion,” he says.

After moving to the United States, Morales worked various odd jobs before he started catering tacos at parties. That’s when he realized he always had a passion for cooking, a passion that began in that little smoke-filled kitchen. “Now I make the connection to being a child, my grandmother, and an adult, I’ve always loved cooking and I’m going to die cooking,” Morales explains.

Abuelitas are crucial to Mexican culture — the matriarchs that bind the family together, their wisdom extends from life advice to the best way to make flavorful frijoles. Their recipes are the stuff of legend, passed down orally from generation to generation. It is in the kitchen where the family unites to experience the culinary artistry and love that emanates from an abuela’s dishes. Many of our greatest chefs first experienced the power of cooking by spending time in the kitchen with their abuelitas. It is these women, who carry ancestral knowledge in their hands, to whom diners owe a debt of gratitude for transmitting their skills to professionals in the kitchens of our favorite restaurants. Whether in Mexico or the United States, our grandmothers’ recipes know no borders, and they continue to remind us of our past, connect us to our roots and influence our future.
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SOLD OUT - THANK YOU!
Coachella 2017 is about to start, and while the artist lineup surfaced months ago, the food lineup wasn’t released until early April. We can expect more Asian cuisine than usual, including items made with matcha, and poke bowls. There will be more high-end, curated choices in general admission than previous years. But perhaps more importantly, will the $100 hot dog with caviar make another appearance?

But Coachella isn’t the only music festival with a stellar food lineup. Arroyo Seco Weekend, Goldenvoice’s newest event slated for June 24-25 at the Rose Bowl, bills the chef and restaurant lineup on the same flier as Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers. High-end L.A. restaurants like Broken Spanish, Redbird and Union will make a showing, alongside trendy casual spots such as Beer Belly, Fat Dragon and Petty Cash. Basically, it’s a collection of restaurants your friends have been Instagramming.

The discovery and sharing of food has become just as important as discovering and sharing music. “I knew [band] before it was cool” has turned into “I ate that before it was cool,” because unique food with quality ingredients is more accessible than ever. And given the marketing power of social media, it’s more picturesque.

Goldenvoice plans the food as carefully as it does the bands. The culinary director of Goldenvoice, Nic Adler, has been curating Coachella’s food program for the past four years, and is also at the helm of Arroyo Seco’s chef and restaurant lineup. “It goes back to that conversation that, say, if grunge or EDM is going to be the next big thing, it’s our job to look at food that way,” Adler says. “For example, if I didn’t have matcha this year, I would be missing it. That would be me misunderstanding the trends. Someone having matcha for the first time at Coachella 100 percent will happen. And then they can always remember, oh I had that at Coachella. Just like they saw a band for the first time that nobody knew. Four years later, that artist is headlining.”

Adler says that for Arroyo Seco, there was a conscious effort to make sure the food lineup aligned strategically with the musical acts.

“Obviously you can’t say enough about Tom Petty, and Mumford & Sons, but [there will also] be someone that feels that strongly about Redbird or Republique or Petty Cash. And the lineup’s not totally done on the food yet — you’ll see a second round of restaurants come on board,” Adler says. “Most fests are driven by the talent, that’s going to get the people there, so understanding what the talent was allowed me and the team to book food vendors that were complementary to the person who would be coming to see Tom Petty or Alabama Shakes.”

But the importance of food at music festivals is not purely based on trends and marketing, and Coachella wasn’t the first to do it. The New Orleans Jazz Fest has always placed food and music at a relatively level playing field, because aside from the tremendous culinary culture of New Orleans, the experience of eating and the experience of listening to a live band can be equally fulfilling. So why haven’t music festivals turned their efforts to food curation until recently?

Logistics. It’s one thing for a chef to turn out dishes to hundreds of guests from the familiarity of his kitchen, but it’s quite another to feed nearly 100,000 people at a festival. Concessionaires selling greasy staples like pizza and lo mein built their businesses on serving food to the masses, while flagship restaurants require specific strategies to succeed. That’s one reason many of the high-end food choices have historically been concentrated in Coachella’s VIP area, but that’s changing this year.

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TACOS

This Bakery Has Excellent Breakfast Tacos on House-Made Tortillas

The breakfast taco takeover of Los Angeles continues apace, this time with a chain restaurant getting into the mix. It’s a local chain, and it’s small. And it’s pretty great quality. It’s La Monarca, the Mexican-inspired bakery that does luscious-looking cakes and has cases full of pastries like cookies and croissants. In the past, the locations haven’t had much in the way of savory items, aside from ham and cheese croissants, some slices of quiche, that sort of thing.

But these new breakfast tacos (the bakery just debuted them a week or so ago) are a very strong jumping-off point, if La Monarca is looking to expand its menu. The taco fillings are thoughtful, varied and delicious: There are five options, including huevo ranchero, soyrrizo, chipotle beef machaca, poblano chicken mole and salsa verde braised beef. The huevo ranchero option, which comes with ham, is the most classically “breakfast” of the choices, but the two beef offerings might be the most delicious.

But the star is the tortilla, which is really the focus of the new menu addition, anyway. As with all items at La Monarca, the traditional lard is eschewed in favor of butter. It doesn’t really change the taste of the tortillas; the difference in quality comes from the fact that they’re made locally, in La Monarca’s kitchens. And they are easily top-five store-bought tortillas in L.A. now. Maybe even top-two? (I’m sure there’s some little place I don’t know of.)

The tortillas are made with flour imported from Sonora. They’re not particularly “pure” — the ingredients list is eight items long — but they’re delicious. They can be purchased in 12-ounce packages to go, also.

—Katherine Spiers

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**TECH**

**On Your Mark, Headset, Go**

L.A.’s virtual reality extravaganza is back. **VRLA** takes over the Convention Center with an all-new look at the emerging technology. You don’t need to know much about VR or its cousin, augmented reality, to immerse yourself in the spectacle. Students and pros may want to sit in on the educational and industry-centric sessions, but anyone else will want to stick to the exhibit hall, filled with the latest in gear and content. **Rick & Morty** co-creator Justin Roiland, who co-founded **VR studio Squanchtendo** last year, and **Unity CEO John Riccitiello** are the keynote speakers. The Easter-weekend event also is host to a mixed reality egg hunt. **L.A. Convention Center, 1201 S. Figueroa St., downtown; Fri.-Sat., April 14-15, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; $30-$299. virtualrealityla.com.** —Liz Ohanesian

**ART**

**Toot Toot, Veep Veep**

After a year of waiting, we’ll finally find out what former vice president and president Selina Meyer is doing now that she’s out of the Oval Office, when **Veep** returns April 16. In anticipation of the comedy’s season-six premiere, **HBO and Gallery 1988** co-host “**The Veep Art Show.**” (In the past, the Melrose pop-art outpost has organized TV-centric tributes to **Seinfeld, Breaking Bad, Arrested Development** and **Bob’s Burgers.**) The exhibit features paintings and prints by 25 artists whose renderings interpret all the major players in the series, including the onetime POTUS, her bumbling staff, her trusted personal aide, Gary, and — perhaps one of **Veep’s** most important characters — his Leviathan messenger bag. 1988 Gallery West, 7308 Melrose Ave., Fairfax; Fri., April 14, 7-9 p.m. (runs through April 22); free. (323) 937-7088, gallery1988.com. —Siran Babayan

**LITERATURE**

**Orwell Said**

Thanks to our current administration,

George **Orwell’s 1984** has re-entered the literary zeitgeist. Sales of the classic 1949 novel about a fictional oppressive regime have increased on Amazon. And on April 4 — the same day the story’s protagonist, Winston, writes his first diary entry — **United State of Cinema** organized screenings at nearly 200 theaters across the country, as well as in Canada and Europe, of director Michael Radford’s movie adaptation, which was released in 1984, and starred John Hurt and Richard Burton (in his last film role). **Trepany House** hosts a staged reading of the entire novel by an eclectic lineup of actors and musicians, including Kate Micucci, Brendon Small, Ron Lynch, Hunter Jackson, John Ennis, Dana Snyder and Olivia Olson. Proceeds benefit **Standing With Standing Rock**, which opposes the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. **Trepany House at the Steve Allen Theater, 4773 Hollywood Blvd., Los Feliz; Sat., April 15, 10 a.m.-11 p.m.; $12. (323) 666-4268, trepannyhouse.org.** —Siran Babayan

**DANCE**

**Subcontinental Swing**

India is an enormous subcontinent with a wide range of dance styles reflecting its many cultures, but we in L.A. usually get to see only one or two of them. **Dance Initial: Four Visions** offers an unparalleled opportunity to experience the variety of South Asian dance with excellent local troupes, as well as guests from India. On the lineup are Odissi from Eastern India, now performed by males but originally limited to female temple dancers; Kathak from Northern India, which evolved from elaborate court dances for the maharajas; Mohiniyattam from Kerala in Southern India, known for its undulating moves, here adapted to music from **Swan Lake** and **Carmen**; and Bharata Natyam, another style from Southern India rooted in philosophy and fable. At 6 p.m., a free performance in the plaza greets early arrivals. **Aratani Theatre, Japan America Cultural Center, 244 S. San Pedro St., downtown; Sat., April 15, 7 p.m.; $15-$35. festivalofsacredmusic.org/dance-india.** —Ann Haskins

**HOLIDAYS**

**Pet Project**

Since the Easter Sunday 1930 reopening of the restored Olvera Street, people have brought their pets to the plaza on the Saturday before Easter for the **Blessing of the Animals.** The roots of the Catholic ceremony are a bit older, dating to the 4th century, when St. Anthony Abbot, the patron saint of animals, began the tradition after healing a pig. Once intended mainly for livestock and farm animals, now pets of all sizes and species are brought to the event, from dogs, cats, rabbits and ducks to snakes, pigs and llamas. Festivities take place all afternoon, but the blessing by Archbishop José Gomez begins at 2 p.m.; lineup starts at 1 p.m. **Father Serra Park, 125 Paseo de la Plaza, downtown; Sat., April 15, noon-5 p.m.; free. olveraevents.com/copy-of-blessing-of-the-animals.** —Matt Stromberg

**sAT 4/15**

**HOLIDAYS**

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Waldo, Carmen Sandiego, Christ — you’ve
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www.CatalinaChamber.com/concerts
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Center, 1200 N. Alvarado St., Echo Park;
after its original release.
remains so popular more than 40 years
film movingly conveys the agony, ecstasy
Instead of trivializing the biblical story, the
this-world landscape of the Negev Desert.
groovy costumes set against the out-of-
through catchy musical numbers and
groovy costumes set against the out-of-
with disciple-turned-betrayer Judas,
story of Jesus' last days, and his conflict
Tim Rice stage production, recounts the
depict the events leading up to Christ's
opera isn't an appropriate vehicle to
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MUSICALS
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Anyone who thinks that a rousing rock
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**SPORTS**

**Strong Arm**
LA LAW (Los Angeles Ladies Arm Wrestling) stages theatrical sporting events that empower women and provide monetary support to community organizations. Their annual Spring Brawl is a rowdy night of athleto-tainment that combines arm wrestling, theater and social justice to raise funds for Project Q, a nonprofit that helps LGBTQIA and homeless youth combat bullying, develop self-esteem and find an identity through hair styling. The roller derby–esque bash is LAW’s fifth birthday celebration, and, yes, there will be cake.

**Comedy**
**Down on One Nealon**
One of the more consistently funny and creative comedians and comedy writers improve their writing skills and market themselves in front of an audience. The part workshop, part reading series invites guests every week to present penned scripts and pilots, which are read by actors and critiqued by the crowd during a Q&A. This week’s installment features “Fluff Piece” by Jessie Stegner, a UCLA MFA student in screenwriting. “Fluff Piece” is a satirical tale of Two City’s Really Awesome Improv Show. Stegner also hosts the monthly, all-female The Ladies Room at Three Clubs bar in Hollywood. iO West, 6366 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood; Mon., April 17, 7 p.m.; free. (323) 962-7560, iomprov.com/west. —Siran Babayan

**MEDITATION**

**There's No Place Like Om**
A small gallery at the California African

American Museum has been taken over by artisterrick Adams’ Network Guru, an installation that features a wall of six yoga mats facing a fake television screen featuring the familiar SMPTE color bars. Over wireless headphones, the phrase “channel to the sea” is repeated ad nauseam like a mantra. In honor of the piece, CAAM is hosting Workshop: Meditation Guru, hosted by activist and motivational figure Kenetia Lee. The workshop’s focus is mindfulness, to “help participants achieve inner peace, clear their thoughts and feel more present” in order to be able to deal with the relentless and horrifying onslaught of political news. California African American Museum, 600 State Drive, Exposition Park; Tue., April 18, 7-9 p.m.; free with RSVP. (213) 744-7432, caamuseum.org. —Gwynedd Stuart
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At the monthly Improv Diary Show, two brave guests read embarrassing diary entries to the audience and then a cast of improvisers acts out scenes based on the reading of the entry. This week’s sacrificial lambs: comedian Serafina Costanza and voice-over artist-comedian Ted Evans. M.I.’s Westside Comedy Theater, 1323-A Third Street Promenade, Santa Monica; Wed., April 19, 7:45 p.m.; $5. (310) 451-0850, westsidecomedy.com.

—Gwynedd Stuart

FILM

Case the Joint

Today is — cough — 4/20 and you want to watch a good stoner movie. Co-written by Dave Chappelle and Neal Brennan, who created Chappelle’s Show, Tamra Davis’ Half Baked (1998) may not come to mind as quickly as Up in Smoke or Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle, but the plot is perfectly paper-thin: Three ganja-smoking goofballs (Chappelle, Jim Breuer and Guillermo Diaz) raise money to bail their friend (Harland Williams) out of jail by selling weed on the street. It’s definitely the only movie that features cameos by Snoop Dogg, Willie Nelson, Jon Stewart, Tracy Morgan, Janeane Garofalo, Bob Saget, Stephen Baldwin and Steven Wright, as well as a flying dog, a scene that involves dropping the soap and some pretty memorable lines (“Kenny’s butthole was in constant jeopardy”). More important, the film includes an appearance by Tommy Chong, the high priest of potheads, so you have his blessing. The Wiltern, 3790 Wilshire Blvd., Koreatown; Thu., April 20, 7 p.m.; $4.20. (213) 388-1400, wiltern.com. —Siran Babayan

MUSICALS

Cry Bloody Murdoch

Though the recent string of sexual harassment and racial discrimination lawsuits filed against Fox News is no laughing matter, Fox News the Musical takes a humorous swipe at the right-wing news network. Directed by Eric Phillips, who also wrote the book, the show features sketch and improv actors Janae Thompson, Jordan Stidham, Ted Reis, Jolie Adamson, Erin Brownett, Jordan Brown, Samantha Labrecque, Rachanee Lumayno, Colton Iverson, Jordan Todd Brown and Rama Vallury singing original songs (music by Bradley Brough and Joanna Castle Miller, lyrics by Miller and Phillips). Set in Fox News’ headquarters in New York, the plot follows a young, secretly liberal African-American intern, who climbs the corporate ladder and unwittingly exposes the corporation’s media bias. Along the way she meets characters with not-so-thinly-veiled names such as Glen O’Ranity. Secret Rose Theatre, 11246 Magnolia Blvd., North Hollywood; Thu., April 20, 8 p.m. (also Fri.-Sun., April 21-23); $20. (818) 762-2272, foxnewsthemusical.com. —Siran Babayan

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Saturday, April 22nd
7:30-10:00pm
BY CATHERINE WAGLEY

This week, one artist screens her sexually explicit videos near Chinatown, and two others explore female archetypes in Hollywood.

More for less and one of a kind

“Colorful has taught them that they don’t need a man,” an actress says in artist Derrick Adams’ short film On. “They need Colorful.” She holds a cardboard box with the word “Colorful” on it, and stands on a comically DIY set. A big, fake TV screen made of fabric squares and plastic hangs on the wall behind her. Several actors peddle cardboard boxes in On, pitching their products as if on a morning show or an infomercial. They’re enthusiastic if confusing. In On, which plays on a loop in Adams’ “Network” at the California African American Museum, all actors are black and their cultural position is ambiguous, because the set is so esoteric and their boxes all seem empty. They seem at least to be parodying on-screen consumerism and polish while acknowledging the sincerity of the desire on-screen consumerism and polish while acknowledging the sincerity of the desire for more, less or whatever. 600 State Drive, Exposition Park; through June 11. (323) 744-7432, caamuseum.org.

Reclining women

Ann Hirsch drew directly on the wall for “Private Residence,” her solo show in Steve Turner’s project gallery. Along one wall, a pastel-colored garden transitions into a sea of naked bodies mingling with social media iconography. Facebook’s new message bubble floats above a women whose arms and legs are bound. An Instagram icon hovers beside a chain of three diamond-shaped openings in red and blue vases of female heads visible through the wall drawings. She has hung a series of large horizontal paintings of reclining, curvy female nudes, posed like the sensuous women in revered old master paintings (think Titian’s Venus of Urbino or Ingres’ Grande Odalisque). Her figures have multicolored eyes and almost haggard features. They’re too distracted, perhaps, by the scenes on the wall behind them to be suity and voluptuous in an old-fashioned way. 6830 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood; through April 15. (323) 460-6830, steveturner.la.

Confined faces

“Heads and Gates,” painter Becky Kolsrud’s show at Tif Sigfrids, contains exactly what the title suggests. Paintings of female heads, cut out so that the panels are the size and shape of faces with necks, hang along one wall. On the opposite wall hang two paintings on rectangular canvases of female heads visible through the diamond-shaped openings in red and blue gates. One olive-colored woman has green leaves growing over her made-up, starlet face. Another yellow-skinned woman has two faces right up next to each other, as if Kolsrud tried depicting her one way, tried again and then left both versions for us to see (as indeed she did). The heads seem more like objects than people, a diverse collection of female archetypes that the artist is using to try to understand what femininity did and can look like. 1507 Wilcox Ave., Hollywood; through April 16. (323) 907-9200, tifsigfrids.com.

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Condom dodger

Every night of “Indecent Exposure,” artist Margie Schnibbe’s 10-day show at Human Resources, invited artists will stage performances in the intimate, upstairs galleries. Kim Yi, who has explored S&M in past performances, and Shelley Holcomb are among participants. Schnibbe, who has worked as a dominatrix and a production designer for Hustler Video, will screen sexually explicit videos she’s made since the early ’90s. Many are comical, if uncomfortable. In Bareback Ph.D., two dogs roughhouse and then hump in dirt while a male voice reads a letter about “having an erection ever so hesitantly” and discusses “the condom thing” (basically, he doesn’t want to use one, but expresses this with many words and much hedging). 410 Cottage Home St., Elysian Park; through April 23. humanresourcesla.com.

The wrong tree

Saudi Arabian artist Abdulnasser Gharem wore a plastic bag over his body in 2007 as he traversed his hometown for his performance Flora and Fauna. He also carried a leafy green tree as his only source of oxygen. This tree had been imported from Australia and was having adverse effects on local plants, and thus served as a good dialogue starter, since people who saw his strange performance already had opinions about his air source. Also a lieutenant in the Royal Saudi Arabian Army, Gharem has done work about the international political situation in the years since Sept. 11 — two of the 19 Saudi Arabians in those planes that day had been his classmates. He will screen video work and talk about his practice this week at LACMA in advance of his soon-to-open solo show, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; Tue., April 18, 7:30 p.m.; free. lacma.org.

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WHIP SMART
A former L.A. dominatrix dredges up tales from the dungeon for readers with the stomach for it

BY TONY MOSTROM

When I was a kid in L.A., I recall scanning all the massage-parlor ads in the papers and gratefully taking in those postage stamp–sized photos of lusciously rounded womanly forms. Nowadays, those ads no longer feature such things; instead, they showcase clear images of action that deliver life

Do you want to live a life that is authentic, present, and engaging? The Change Agent provides a clear plan for action that delivers life, asBruce Barcomb wants to say. You deserve more than compassionate encouragement and clear actions that show you how to be present, and you? Bruce Barcomb wants to tell you.

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Whip Smart (St. Martin’s Press, $26.99) by USC grad Jenny Nordbak will be released Saturday, April 14. Nordbak curiously and repeatedly refers to her vagina as her “lady bits,” making her anatomy sound regrettably like other ads, the ones featuring sexy, postcard-like images of Barbie dolls. She takes on the verbiage of the trade, referring to fans as “vanilla” friends, the ones who live outside the BDSM world. She wonders about the roots of her “current perversions” and looks back to her childhood for answers: “Why ... did my Barbies somehow always end up tied to something, helpless and tortured?”

Who (I am sadly forced to ask) are these guys who pay to have their balls tweezered for cheap, porny thrills, look elsewhere; those who live outside the BDSM world. She’s not a shrink, she’s a former L.A. dominatrix dredging up tales from the dungeon for readers with the stomach for it.

“WHY ... DID MY BARBIES SOMEHOW ALWAYS END UP TIED TO SOMETHING, HELPLESS AND TORTURED?”
—JENNY NORDBAK

Despite the sex-positive nature of the book, Nordbak curiously and repeatedly refers to her vagina as her “lady bits,” making her anatomy sound regrettable like an off-brand dry dog food. Still, the story of her secret life, long kept hidden from family and friends, is presented as a tale of female empowerment. That’s even though on more than one occasion she carries out actions that would strike the average reader as humiliating, as when she finds herself excreting into a plastic bag for a coprophage client or carting around a warm, steaming creating into a plastic bag for a coprophage client or carting around a warm, steaming

In all this urine-soaked carnage of whipping and floggings, the remote possibility of orgasm seems galaxies away; as Nordbak notes here, some of her clients don’t even want that. Nordbak never addresses what psych-kinks might be at work in her clients’ heads, but she’s not a shrink, she’s a domme (professional name, Scarlett). It’s just business.

The Change Agent provides a clear plan for action that delivers life, as Bruce Barcomb wants to say. You deserve more than compassionate encouragement and clear actions that show you how to be present, and you? Bruce Barcomb wants to tell you.

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The Acclaimed Production Returns for Two Weeks Only!
Louisa Hill’s Lord of the Underworld’s Home for Unwed Mothers condemns the “baby scoop era”

BY BILL RADEN

The uncredited player in Louisa Hill’s disarmingly sweet new work about the irresistible tidal forces that course through the maternal bond may well be Donald Trump. Trump’s election has been astutely described as the last great gasp of “regressive, patriarchal American whiteness,” and it’s hard to forget what that portends for reproductive rights while watching Hill’s affecting story about a 1960s teen mother forever scarred by the loss of her baby to adoption.

Partly that’s because both the setting and the subject of Lord of the Underworld’s Home for Unwed Mothers, having its world premiere at Skylight Theatre, is what has been called the “baby scoop era.” That was the period between World War II and the sexual revolution when the uncontested, white patriarchal authority of the middle-class family routinely dealt with the era’s spike in teenage pregnancies through the forced separation and adoption of the child from its underage mother. The play is structured as a fancifully time-warped epistolary exchange between mother Dee (the searing Corryn Cummins, in a masterfully heartfelt performance) and daughter Corie (a forceful Michaela Slezak). Adrian Gonzalez and Amy Harmon are the play’s strikingly versatile, quick-change chorus, effortlessly embodying the parents, boyfriends and psychologists who inhabit both of the women’s worlds.

Act 1 mostly deals with Dee’s insistently archetypal, circa-1964, middle-American brush with motherhood. Hill puts Dee through the paces of a postwar ideology that saw reproductive freedom as a bothersome impediment to social mobility. But anybody passingly familiar with Hollywood’s unwed-teen-mother melodramas of the 1950s and early ’60s — or who remembers Madonna’s politically suspect teen-pregnancy hit “Papa Don’t Preach” — may find themselves squirming over how the play develops pathos with what seems an unquestioned and one-sided embrace of the inviolable right of witless...
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KOCH HEADS

In the program notes for *Supper*, Phinneas Kiyomura remarks that his play about four right-wing billionaire brothers is not about the Koch brothers. But you could have fooled me.

A number of writers, including Daniel Schulman in both the biography *Sons of Wichita* and a *May 2014 Vanity Fair* article, have written about the personal animosities and legal quarrels that have transpired within this super-wealthy clan. Kiyomura’s pitch-black narrative — I’d call it a comedy except that the end I wasn’t sure it was one — is nowhere near naturalistic, nor does it try to be. But there are a few analogues between the real world and the play, starting with the names of Kiyomura’s characters: Charles, David, Freddy (for Frederick) and Billy (for William). More germane are the parallel dynamics played out among these four, along with an unseen fifth, their father, Fred. According to Schulman, father Fred was a taskmaster who believed in corporal punishment and drove his sons hard, especially Charles, the dominant personality among the siblings and the ideological and entrepreneurial force behind their expanding empire. In the play, as in real life, an aligned Charles (Darrett Sanders) and David (Alex Elliott-Funk) run the family business whereas the other two, though shareholders, remain outsiders.

Kiyomura’s fantastical scenario takes place in Kyoto, Japan, at the home of Fredy’s fiancée, Naomi (Keiko Elizabeth), an ostensibly demure and courteous Asian woman with the instincts of a tigress. Charles and David have traveled to Japan to meet her, and are anticipating the arrival of their father as well. The engagement is something of a surprise, as Freddy (Joel Scher) has always been regarded by his brothers, especially the sneeringly macho Charles, as gay. And you can see why, as Freddy greets them garbed in a lovely kimono with lifting mannerisms to match. What Charles doesn’t know is that Billy (Will McFadden), from whom he’s long been estranged, also will be there, and that this get-together has been planned by the other three to challenge Charles’ dominance. And there are other incendiary plots afoot, including one hatched by campy Freddy and cryptic Naomi, that will blow the already tottering familial framework sky-high.

It’s a frequently funny and outrageously dark portrayal of male rivalry, aggression and bonding in an imaginary universe where there’s absolutely nothing around to restrain them. And as the sole female in the bunch, the sly and slithery Naomi will not let herself be outdone.

Alina Phelan’s sure-handed direction shepherds a terrific ensemble, including Sanders’ down-and-dirty Charles, front and center throughout, and Elliott-Funk in a subtler and wonderfully skilled performance as his irascible lackey. McFadden is on point as the relative interloper, while Scher as the flaming Freddy and Elizabeth as his helpmate each steal scenes with their inspired shenanigans.

**16-year-olds to bear children.**

Act 2 does little to allay such misgivings. That’s when the narrative’s POV abruptly shifts to Corie, as she brings Dee up to date on what has happened since their one-and-only 10 minutes together outside a 1964 delivery room. The trauma of their parting has marked the daughter’s life as deeply as it has Corie. That’s when the narrative’s POV is not before some of the plot’s most notable among those is how the two characters don’t seem to have evolved offstage. Cummins ably adds the emotional patina of 25 additional years to Dee, but drama is about relationships, and the script remains awkwardly silent on any husbands or children that might people her past. Hill likewise saddles Corie with a gap that for most women in their 20s is littered with ex-boyfriends.

That said, director Tony Abatemarco and the cast are complemented by designer Cindy Lin’s emblamatic set of twisting roots and broken greenhouse windows in a staging suffused with as much nostalgia as knowing camp.

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Wolves, it seems, are mostly misunderstood. Equally misunderstood in American culture is the war veteran. In recent years, talk of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has finally made its way to the mainstream, but there’s a gaping chasm between talk and actually understanding how and where vets fit into our society postcombat; consider that 22 vets take their own lives every day in this country.

But in Frazier Park, just a 90-minute drive up into the mountains from Los Angeles, Matthew Simmons has made the vital connection between the woes of the wolf and those of the war veteran. On the 3,000-acre wilderness property of Lockwood Animal Rescue Center (LARC), Simmons has taken in hurt, abandoned and exploited captive wolves and wolf-dog hybrids and, in doing so, realized he may have found a way to help war vets heal, too.

As caught in filmmaker Riccardo Ferraris’ new documentary The War in Between, Simmons, a Navy vet himself, uses LARC as a mutual rehabilitation center. Men and women from all over apply for this program, where they will work every day feeding and tending to the wolves. In the film, Ferraris shows Simmons reading through just a sampling of emails from prospective candidates — many of whom are homeless — and each letter is heartbreaking.

“Someone applying for a program like this, it’s the last chance,” Ferraris says. “They already went to a psychologist, to PTSD classes, took drugs. There’s no other reason for anyone to apply to a program like this in the middle of nowhere with extreme weather conditions unless there are no other choices.”

The film mainly follows two veterans: Jim, who’s nearing the end of his time at LARC, and Juan, who has just arrived. Ferraris says Simmons warned him that it would be very difficult to get any of the residents to open up about their trauma, let alone on camera. But Ferraris put in the time, cultivating friendships with the men.

On a long car ride back to Los Angeles, Jim opened up to Ferraris about his suicide attempts and, on camera, he describes the tears streaming down his gun barrel as he was seconds away from taking his own life.

With Juan, Ferraris had to use the same techniques Simmons teaches to the vets working with the wolves: You have to be patient and let them come to you. “I spent so much time alongside Juan and he never ever even said hello to me for months,” Ferraris says. “But slowly, we started to approach each other.”

The director’s experience with Juan mirrors that of the veteran’s experience with the wolves. As Simmons says, only one wolf will bond with one of the vets. And in his first days, Juan is shown quietly attempting to initiate an affectionate friendship with the animals, searching out his “one.” It’s months before one of the creatures nuzzles his snout into Juan’s hands. Remember, these wolves also have PTSD, often from the ways humans have treated them in the past.

Ferraris says that before he began filming, he had no idea wolves were being bred in captivity for roadside attractions and hunting — basically torture. Simmons recounts one wolf he rescued that was testing IED, booby-trap bombs before her owners planned to kill her. He describes her bloodied paws and broken spirit, begging for belly rubs. The director juxtaposes these uplifting beats of recovery with a difficult outing to Montana, where Jim and Juan are researching illegal wolf trapping.

Ferraris reserves judgment as he records the thoughts of wolf hunters. One swears the wolves are pure evil because he once saw them slaughter a herd of elk and move on, which is enough evidence for him to set vicious traps and murder whole packs. These justifications aren’t new. In every state where wolves live, ranchers and hunters demonize the animals. Yet wolves are responsible for thinning herds of their weak so herbivores don’t overgraze on the land. Wolves often will return again and again to the same kill to feed for weeks, sometimes months. What they don’t eat is offered up to the scavenging animals that depend on the wolf for their meals.

On the journey to Montana, Juan and Jim see their first wolf in the wild. The experience is almost too much for Juan to take. He peers through the tranquilizer rifle’s viewfinder at his target, who lopes across the snowscape, unaware anyone’s watching him. In a different time, Juan, a former sniper, would be shooting to kill, but on this day, he is duty bound to the wolf to help it live. This gives Juan a new kind of confidence, a reason to be. And that’s the whole point of Simmons’ program, which proves with each new graduate to be a success — John now has a full-time job and a life he sees as worth living.

Like war veterans, wolves exist nearly everywhere on Earth. Writers like Barry Lopez, R.D. Lawrence and Rick McIntyre have long intimated that how a society treats its wolves is indicative of how it will treat its most vulnerable citizens, and in the United States, this theory holds true, especially for veterans who feel lost or forgotten Ferraris says he wanted to avoid making any political statements and simply focus on the relationship between human and animal, but the political is inherent in this tale. He tells me he’s been pitching the story of this documentary to film festivals, and he’s had a difficult time explaining it all in a single sentence.

“In the end, I decided I would tell them, ‘It’s a love story,’” he says. “Between wolves and men.”

HEAL THE LIVING CAPTURES FRAGILITY OF LIFE

A catastrophic accident leaves one family in ruins and bestows another with precious hope in Heal the Living, a melo-drama immeasurably enhanced by the piercing, poetic direction of Katell Quillevéré (Guzanne). On his way home from a dawn surfing trip, carefree teen Simon (Gabin Verdet) is involved in a car crash, leaving him physically intact but brain-dead. This shakes his estranged parents (Emmanuelle Seigner and Kool Shen) to the core. While grappling with this tragedy, they’re forced to decide whether to donate his organs; across Paris, former orchestral violinist Claire (Anne Dorval) confronts her own worsening degenerative heart condition alongside her doting sons (Finnegan Oldfield and Theo Cholbi).

Drenched in a beautifully melancholic score by Alexandre Desplat, the ensuing tale — which also intermittently shifts its gaze to an organ-donor consultant (Tahar Rahim), a lonely nurse (Monia Chokri) and Simon’s girlfriend (Galatée Bellug) — is a familiar one about death begetting life. Quillevéré’s compassionate handling of her material (which she adapted from Maylis de Kerangal’s novel with co-writer Gilles Taurand) finds illuminating truths in grace-note details, from Simon gliding down empty nocturnal streets on his bike, to a final kind gesture given to the boy during his last moments.

At once sorrowful and optimistic, Heal the Living captures the terrifying fragility of life, even as it also recognizes the strength derived from the many connections — organic, emotional and associative — that bind and define us.

-Nick Schager

HEAL THE LIVING (RÉPARER LES VIVANTS)

Directed by Katell Quillevéré
Written by Quillevéré and Gilles Taurand
Cohen Media Group | Monica Film Center
I have been trained for this." Those words—or some variation of them—come up several times throughout James Gray’s The Lost City of Z, and they serve as one key to this strange, sprawling, majestic film. In adapting the 2009 nonfiction book about the search for a fabled city in the Amazon, Gray has taken out much of the actual journalism, layering of perspective, and some of the mystery that New Yorker writer David Grann brought to the material. Grann’s book is at least partly concerned with a contemporary investigation into the fate of the obsessed British explorer Percy Fawcett, who disappeared with his son in the Amazon in 1925; the film, less so. But in opting to tell a more linear story about the film, less so. But in opting to

Gray’s previous films were also studies in New York’s tribal rituals; be they Russian émigrés in Brooklyn or officers of the NYPD, his characters have always been keenly aware of the unwritten, at times immoral rules by which they must abide. Now the director has trained his anthropologist’s eye on British society in the war-torn decades between the Edwardian era and modernity. What he finds is a world of institutionalized aggression where conflict and domination are built into the very fabric of life. Gray shoots many of the scenes in England with an old-fashioned polish that makes everything feel predetermined, orderly—from the regimented hunts on country estates, to the red military uniforms dancing with coordinated grace, to the ritualized debates over the findings of Fawcett’s initial expeditions. The director’s filmic references—whether it’s The Leopard, The Four Feathers, The Charge of the Light Brigade or Barry Lyndon—are all to movies about hierarchies and the ways an established social order preserves and propagates itself. Fawcett and his countrymen know that that order will always persist.

Until, that is, it doesn’t. The world Fawcett knew and navigated for so many years is the same one that soon is blowing its own brains out on the fields of World War I, where the aggression that he and his kind had trained for all their lives is taken to its most absurd extremes. In the trenches, before charging into battle with his men, Fawcett looks longingly at a photo not of his family but of the Amazon. The meaning is twofold: One, that this married father of three has become un-naturally possessed by his quest for Z. But also that, compared to the mechanized slaughterhouse of modern warfare, the supposed hostility of the jungle might actually be somewhat welcome, a source of serenity.

And as Hunnam’s sad-eyed man goes from ambitious officer to reluctant explorer to wound-ed cynic to full-on obsessive convinced he can find the great lost city, we get a life’s journey that builds toward dissolution. In Amazonia, as Fawcett travels upriver, accompanied initially by Corporal Henry Costin (an unrecognizably grizzled and charming Robert Pattinson) and later by his son Jack (Tom Holland), the orderly cruelty of Western civilization recedes and he starts to become someone else. There’s a freedom here amid the terror and uncertainty. Gradually, the old-world meticulousness that Gray’s filmmaking always brings to the screen gives way to something more abstract, a drifting impermanence, as if the director were trying to capture—with no losing of his visual grace or sweep—the wide, beautiful unknowability of existence.

If it sounds as if I’m having difficulty describing where The Lost City of Z eventually goes, that’s because I am; words can’t quite do it justice. The good news is that James Gray, even as he pushes at the edges of what is filmable, never loses his capacity for creating moments of rapturous beauty. See this thing on the biggest screen you can find.

THE LOST CITY OF Z
Directed and written by James Gray
Amazon Studios/Bleecker Street Media
ArcLight Hollywood, Landmark

THE LOST CITY OF Z
Directed and written by James Gray
Amazon Studios/Bleecker Street Media
ArcLight Hollywood, Landmark

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subjects, in ways both big and small.

Lena and her wayward childhood BFF, Ginger — the former dealing with psychological and drug and alcohol use. There's no judgment to be found here, only an unvarnished look at her struggles to figure out who they are, what they want and how they might achieve their goals. In the figures of boyfriend-craving girls and their daily life in Romania — is the girl's best friend the vehicle to fire-catching speed while talking about living life a quarter-mile at a time. This opening sequence is not just a nostalgic reminder of the series' kickoff 16 years ago. It also serves as a burst of pure, promising showmanship from Straight Outta Compton director F. Gary Gray — in his first Furious movie — who immediately puts his stamp on the film with exhilarating style. Of course, anyone who has seen the trailers or commercials knows that Dom's moment of victory won't last long. This is the movie where he betrays that family that, sequel after sequel, he hasn't been able to stop talking about. Tapped by cyber-terrorist Cipher (Charlize Theron) — never trust a white woman in dreads — Dom is coerced into turning against his own squad. Dom's disdainfully weighs hard on everyone, but it certainly hits his wife, Letty (Michelle Rodriguez), the hardest. Gray and his stars anchor all the action to come with surprisingly emotional credibility. (Kristen Yonsoo Kim)

GRADUATION (BACALAUREAT) Romanian director Cristian Mungiu's Graduation is one of the best films I've ever seen about corruption. You won't find many fast-talking crooks or elaborate sting operations here, though. Instead, we see mostly good people doing what they think is right, and then the acute mess in which they find themselves. Mungiu's primary vessel for exploring this world is Dr. Romeo Aldea (Adrian Titieni), a respected Cluj physician and upstanding pillar of the community whose high school senior daughter, Eliza (Maria Dragus), has secured a conditional college scholarship to study in Britain; all Eliza has to do is pass her final exams. But an attempted assault outside the school leaves her injured and shaken right before the day of her first test. Believing that an education in England — far from the despair and deception of daily life in Romania — is the girl's best chance for a better life, Romeo finds himself becoming what he hates most: someone who tries to game the system. When Eliza's grade on that test winds up unsatisfactory, Romeo's police captain friend (Vlad Ivanov) arranges for Romeo to talk to Bulai (Vlad Ciubotaru), a local bigwig who needs a liver transplant and who can arrange for the school authorities to help; all Romeo has to do is put Bulai at the top of the transplant list. Such a cursory description of the plot does no justice to the casual, organic way that Mungiu allows Romeo to consider forsaking his values — or at least what Romeo thinks are his values. We eventually realize that Graduation is partly about how people like Romeo have always benefited from cutting corners, from the insular security of their connections and their status. (Bilge Ebiri)

Bette vs. Joan and Jonathan Demme's Hits

The Fate of the Furious

Holy moly! This is perhaps the fastest, and if not, certainly the most furious of the Fast & Furious movies. The goal with each new film seems to be to be one-up the last. But before F8 goes into full gear, it gives us a good ol' drag race in Cuba, featuring main man Dom Toretto (Vin Diesel) doing what he does best: revving up a vehicle to fire-catching speed while talking about living life a quarter-mile at a time. This opening sequence is not just a nostalgic reminder of the series' kickoff 16 years ago. It also serves as a burst of pure, promising showmanship from Straight Outta Compton director F. Gary Gray — in his first Furious movie — who immediately puts his stamp on the film with exhilarating style. Of course, anyone who has seen the trailers or commercials knows that Dom's moment of victory won't last long. This is the movie where he betrays that family that, sequel after sequel, he hasn't been able to stop talking about. Tapped by cyber-terrorist Cipher (Charlize Theron) — never trust a white woman in dreads — Dom is coerced into turning against his own squad. Dom's disdainfully weighs hard on everyone, but it certainly hits his wife, Letty (Michelle Rodriguez), the hardest. Gray and his stars anchor all the action to come with surprisingly emotional credibility. (Kristen Yonsoo Kim)

Graduation (Bacalaureat) Romanian director Cristian Mungiu's Graduation is one of the best films I've ever seen about corruption. You won't find many fast-talking crooks or elaborate sting operations here, though. Instead, we see mostly good people doing what they think is right, and then the acute mess in which they find themselves. Mungiu's primary vessel for exploring this world is Dr. Romeo Aldea (Adrian Titieni), a respected Cluj physician and upstanding pillar of the community whose high school senior daughter, Eliza (Maria Dragus), has secured a conditional college scholarship to study in Britain; all Eliza has to do is pass her final exams. But an attempted assault outside the school leaves her injured and shaken right before the day of her first test. Believing that an education in England — far from the despair and deception of daily life in Romania — is the girl's best chance for a better life, Romeo finds himself becoming what he hates most: someone who tries to game the system. When Eliza's grade on that test winds up unsatisfactory, Romeo's police captain friend (Vlad Ivanov) arranges for Romeo to talk to Bulai (Petré Ciubotaru), a local bigwig who needs a liver transplant and who can arrange for the school authorities to help; all Romeo has to do is put Bulai at the top of the transplant list. Such a cursory description of the plot does no justice to the casual, organic way that Mungiu allows Romeo to consider forsaking his values — or at least what Romeo thinks are his values. We eventually realize that Graduation is partly about how people like Romeo have always benefited from cutting corners, from the insular security of their connections and their status. (Bilge Ebiri)
promising art professorship in small-town Washington. Adjusting to this new, extremely white neighborhood is no easy task, and we witness plenty of cringe-inducing moments of passive-aggressive suburban chicchat: “You are so interesting,” a neighbor tells Mack and Gina, but it’s not a compliment. The film is sharper in its observation of urban pretensions than suburban blandness. Clark, adorably aloof, with an inquisitive expression on his face, at one point describes his music tastes as “Afropunk, Björk, ‘90s hip-hop and free jazz.” He delivers his music tastes as “Afropunk, Björk, Sission on his face, at one point describes

The back end of some future film festival’s Complete Richard Gere Retrospective won’t be lacking for fascinating surprises. Like Oren Moverman’s Time Out of Mind (2015), a paying studied of homelessness, Joseph Cedar’s Norman finds Gere as a lost soul haunting a Manhattan that just doesn’t see him. What other movie star diminishes himself, seeks to play the guy you don’t notice? As Sinatra might have it, Gere’s Norman is a puppet/pauper/pawn trying to gladden his way into being a king.

He’s a pushy, creepy, full-of-shit shlemiel who pesters the assistants to wealthy men with can’t-miss investment opportunities and has, so far as the audience can tell, no home life, source of income or sense of whether he’s lying or not. Gere jabbers amusingly, and there’s something touching in his Norman’s persistence. Early on, he puts the touch on an Israeli politician (Lior Ashkenazi), doing the man a favor in order to get his help pulling off an unobtainable deal; three years later, that pol’s the prime minister, and he appreciates all that Norman has done for him. Forever on the make, Norman, of course, attempts to leverage this connection, overpromising what he can deliver to a rabbi (Steve Buscemi!) whose synagogue is facing eviction — and inadvertently triggering a scandal. Cedar wittily lays out Norman’s network of lies and exaggerations, scandal. Cedar wittily lays out Norman’s network of lies and exaggerations,

The Nut Job (Melissa Anderson)

and here it drags the action down. But even if there’s a sense of inevitability to Tommy’s Honour, the action (key to any sports movie’s success) and setting win out. Golf’s become such a ridiculously well-heeled pastime that it’s refreshing to see it portrayed in its infancy, when clubs were carried like a bunch of kindling and the desolate greens of St. Andrews were more like the hazards of today’s game. (Pete Vonder Haar)

VINCE GIORDANO: THERE’S A FUTURE IN THE PAST

“…”

“Outstanding!”

Wise, Wistful and Well-Observed.

TRUMAN

Best Friends Are Forever.

the female gaze.” These characters — upper middle class, urban, liberal — are familiar types, though they’re positioned by the film as automatically more interesting than the suburbanites (the ones in “little boxes”). The inelegant tendencies of the family’s new colleagues, expressed in a cloying metaphor in the family’s new home: Mold persists under the wallpaper, signifying that not everything’s perfect in these seemingly charming houses. (Abby Bender)

MY ENTIRE HIGH SCHOOL SINKING INTO THE SEA

Few things promise a wild visual ride like a movie titled My Entire High School Sinking Into The Sea opening with an epoxy warning, and Dash Shaw’s animated whirligig of a riff on The Poseidon Adventure does not disappoint. Self-absorbed sophomore Dash (Jason Schwartzman) is a writer and unreliable narrator whose annoyance that his best friend Assal (Reggie Watts) is becoming romantically involved with their fellow schooljournalistVerti (Maya Rudolph) is only slightly overshadowed by their cliffside high school falling into the ocean. Along with snooty popular girl Mary (Lena Dunham) and badass Lunch Lady Lorraine (Susan Sarandon), they climb to the roof through a fiery, corpse-strewn nightmare of survivors with wasted no time descending into High Rise–style mayhem. A teen outcast’s revenge fantasy made manifest, My Entire High School Sinking Into The Sea’s lo-fi, collage-heavy, Squigglevision style earns its epilepsy warning. And while Maya Rudolph has been the MVP of bigger-budgeted animated films great (Big Hero Six), good (Turbo) and dire (The Nut Job), teaming her with Reggie Watts is an explosion of awesomeness that’s only surprising insofar as nobody thought to do it before. Sinking Into The Sea is fun, but an hour of just Rudolph and Watts in the recording studio would be no less buoyant. (Sheryllyn Connolly)

NORMAN: THE MODERATE RISE AND

TRAGIC FALL OF A NEW YORK FIXER

...
### Neighborhood Movie Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theatre</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TCL CHINESE THEATRE IMAX</td>
<td>6925 Hollywood Blvd. (323) 461-3331</td>
<td>(323) 461-3331</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMC CENTURY CITY 15</td>
<td>10250 Santa Monica Blvd. (310) 441-7444</td>
<td>(310) 441-7444</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMC MARINER 22</td>
<td>15000 Ventura Blvd. (818) 492-1300</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOP OF THE POPS CINEMA</td>
<td>4601 Lankershim Blvd (818) 782-3665</td>
<td>(818) 782-3665</td>
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<tr>
<td>THE CINERAMA DOME</td>
<td>1000 W. Pico Blvd. (310) 835-6500</td>
<td>(310) 835-6500</td>
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<tr>
<td>SANTA MONICA FILM THEATRE</td>
<td>1700 Pico Blvd. (310) 452-5555</td>
<td>(310) 452-5555</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACIFIC ELECTRIC CAPITAL Theatres</td>
<td>621 S. Grand Ave. (213) 624-3434</td>
<td>(213) 624-3434</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCA CARAVAN CINEMA</td>
<td>8701 Sunset Blvd. (310) 831-6989</td>
<td>(310) 831-6989</td>
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<tr>
<td>SANTA MONICA THEATRE</td>
<td>1324 7th St. (310) 451-2727</td>
<td>(310) 451-2727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILSHIRE SUNSET THEATRE</td>
<td>4902 Wilshire Blvd. (310) 854-1933</td>
<td>(310) 854-1933</td>
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### Movie Listings

#### TCL CHINESE THEATRE IMAX
- **Get Out**
  - Los Feliz 3
  - Fri-Sat: 11:45 a.m., 2:45, 5:45, 8:35, 11:45 p.m.
  - Sun: 11:45 a.m., 2:45, 5:45, 8:35, 11:45 p.m.
  - Mon-Wed: 12:45, 2:45, 5:45, 8:35, 11:45 p.m.
  - Thu: 12:45, 2:45, 5:45, 8:15, 11:45 p.m.

#### TCL CHINESE THEATRE
- **The Fate of the Furious**
  - Los Feliz 3
  - Fri: 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.
  - Sat: 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.
  - Sun: 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

#### PACIFIC ELECTRIC CAPITAL Theatres
- **The Grateful Dead Movie (40th Anniversary)**
  - Sunset Strip
  - Fri: 12:15, 2:15, 4:15, 6:15, 8:15, 10:15 p.m.
  - Sat: 12:15, 2:15, 4:15, 6:15, 8:15, 10:15 p.m.
  - Sun: 12:15, 2:15, 4:15, 6:15, 8:15, 10:15 p.m.
  - Mon-Wed: 12:15, 2:15, 4:15, 6:15, 8:15, 10:15 p.m.
  - Thu: 12:15, 2:15, 4:15, 6:15, 8:15, 10:15 p.m.

#### VISTA
- **The Fate of the Furious**
  - Fri-Sat: 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.
  - Thu: 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.
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his year probably will be remembered as a turning point for Coachella. Now in its 18th year, and fighting to retain its reputation as the pacesetter for all American festivals against stiff competition both locally (FYF and nationally (Governors Ball, Outside Lands)), Coachella seems to be moving away from the “anything as long as it’s cool” model that has guided its programming over most of its history and more toward an approach that might best be described as “anything as long as the kids love it.”

This year, that means no more legacy rock bookings (unless you count Radiohead; I think they’re fine, an attitude tinged with the rabid fans even that seems to drive the rabid fans even I’m glowed up,” Anderson .Paak sings this year probably will be that’s the best work of Q’s career, worthy of a spot on our list of L.A.’s best albums of 2016. It’s the street-wise yin to To Pimp a Butterfly’s consciousness- raising yang, using its title phrase as a recurring image for the dehumanizing effects of the constant twin threats of police brutality and gang violence. Also, not incidentally, even the album’s grimmest tracks are total bangers.

7. Four Tet (Saturday)

Even since pioneering — and then abandoning — the sound critics dubbed “folktronica” with his albums Pause and Rounds, Kieran Hebden has forever stayed one step ahead of trends in electronic music, exploring an ever-broadening palette of techno, jazz, post-rock and world music, collaborating with everyone from Steve Reich to Jamie xx, and generally kicking ass and forcing his contemporaries to rethink what they’re doing every couple of years. His most recent release, Morning/Evening, finds him at his prettiest but also his most experimental, as he stretches two companion ambient tracks, laced with enchanting Indian vocals, into sprawling, raga-inspired, 20-minute meditations.

6. Lady GaGa (Saturday)

No, she’s not Beyoncé, and Joanne sure as hell ain’t Lemonade. But circumstances may conspire to make this a Lady Gaga set for the ages. As Bey’s replacement act, and coming off the lukewarm response to her Super Bowl halftime show and her country-tinged fifth album, Stefani Germanotta will be coming into Coachella with something to prove, and she’s likely to pull out all the stops in an effort to remind everyone that, just eight years ago, she was the most exciting performer in pop music.

5. Richie Hawtin (Friday)

It’s hard to put into words just how good Richie Hawtin’s Sahara Tent set was at Coachella in 2007. Hearing techno that dense and precise was a little like dancing inside a pointillist painting; the more you listened, the more little details revealed themselves, all adding up to a sublime, constantly evolving whole. He returns to the Polo Grounds this year to debut a brand-new live show called Close — Spontaneity & Synchronicity, which promises to add a cool new visual component to Hawtin’s endlessly innovative approach to Detroit techno.

4. Bonobo (Friday)

The fact that British-born, L.A.-based Simon Green’s Bonobo project is now one of the most widely recognized names in electronic music makes me do a little happy dance in my chair as I type this. He’s achieved this success without selling out or compromising his core sound, a downtempo yet danceable style that mixes programmed beats and synths with live horns, bass, keys and the occasional soulful guest vocal from the likes of Rhye, Erykah Badu and Andreya Triana. His latest album, Migration, released in January, is another triumph, brimming with richly detailed, blissed-out headnodders.

3. Radiohead (Friday)

This will, weirdly, be my first time seeing Radiohead live. I say “weirdly” because I am, as far as I know, possibly the only white male music journalist in existence who is not a rabid follower of the venerable art-rock band’s every move. It’s not that I hate Radiohead; I think they’re fine, an attitude that seems to drive the rabid fans even crazier than saying you hate them outright. However, I am fond of pointing out, only half-kidding, that the two greatest things they’ve ever done are The Bends and Thom Yorke’s dance moves in the “Lotus Flower” video. With all that being said, I’m psyched to finally see them live, because they’re still fucking Radiohead, and their live shows are still the stuff of legend.

2. The Belleville Three (Sunday)

For techno fans, these are Coachella 2017’s real headliners: Derrick May, Juan Atkins and Kevin Saunderson, the three Detroit DJs and producers who pioneered the genre in the early 1980s. Though long known as the Belleville Three, after the high school where they all met, aside from a few one-off gigs, they’ve seldom appeared together — until this year, when they’re promising to do an international tour and even release new music under their long-standing moniker. Coachella marks the first of these shows, and so far, their only other confirmed date is at Detroit’s Movement festival in May. So yeah, this is a big deal.

1. Kendrick Lamar (Sunday)

As soon as Queen Bey dropped out, we all knew who became the de facto headliner. Even though he just headlined FYF last August (where he cruised it), anticipation for K-Dot’s second Coachella performance is running red-hot since he started teasing the release of his fourth studio album, expected to drop April 7. Lead singer “Humble” signals a move away from the introspection and experimentation of To Pimp a Butterfly and on to some well-deserved ass-kicking. “This that Grey Poupon, that Evian, that TED Throne to “sit down, lil’ bitch, be humble.” As brilliant at TPAB was, it’s thrilling to hear the game’s best pure rapper just flexing and putting everyone else on notice. If he comes out at Coachella with the same attitude, it might go down as the best hip-hop headlining set in the festival’s history.

To see our complete ranking of all 161 Coachella acts, visit LAWeekly.com/music.
Coachella is the DJ Khaled of festivals: garish, oversized, powered by social media and fueled by special guests. There are times it has been the best and times it has suffered from success; unquestionably, it has changed a lot. The once-tiny two-day festival featuring obscure underground stars became a two-week mainstream behemoth with an H&M line and unofficial weekend parties where brands lamely try to siphon off residual cool. Somewhere along the way, the festival realized that its major key was the surprise guest appearance.

Due to its iconic stature and proximity to L.A., Coachella consistently manages to get the most impressive cameos outside of, well, a DJ Khaled album (this year, Goldenvoice recognized a kindred spirit and finally booked him for the fest). In 2014, Pharrell brought out Gwen Stefani, Snoop Dogg, Nelly and Busta Rhymes. On two occasions, Calvin Harris recruited Rihanna. Jay Z trotted out Nas and Beyoncé. There was the year that Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg enlisted 50 Cent, Warren G, Wiz Khalifa, Kendrick Lamar, Eminem and that ghoulish 2Pac-o-gram. The list extends infinitely: Phoenix and R. Kelly, Arcade Fire and Deborah Harry, A$AP Rocky and Kanye, Major Lazer and Usher, Chance the Rapper and Justin Bieber, G-Eazy and Lil Wayne. You get the idea.

With this year’s edition looming over the next two weekends, I’ve compiled a guide to handicapping this year’s Coachella special guests. Bets accepted in cash, credit or the scalps of frat bros wearing Native American headdresses.

**Kendrick Lamar**
**Dr. Dre — Odds: 2:1**
**Why:** It’s a headlining, homecoming performance from the biggest artist on Dre’s label since Eminem. There’s no place old, semi-retired doctors would rather be than the Greater Palm Springs area.

**Why not:** Exhausted from golfing.

**TDE — Odds: 3:4**
**Why:** Because TDE brands itself far too well for this not to bring out Schoolboy Q, Jay Rock, Ab-Soul, et al.

**Why not:** With his new album dropping, Kendrick may opt to keep the focus on himself.

**Travis Scott**
**Migos — Odds: 2:1**
**Why:** Migos are playing the Friday night of weekend one in Santa Barbara and have multiple songs with the Houston rapper.

**Why not:** Quavo listened closely to his own lyrics on “Portland” and opted to cut off people riding their wave.

**Lady Gaga**
**Tony Bennett — Odds: 5:1**
**Why:** At this point in her career, it’s the only possible way left to shock people.

**Why not:** She’s unable to explain to Bennett what Coachella is.

**Gucci Mane**
**Nicki Minaj — Odds: 4:1**
**Why:** They have a new single out. Nicki lives most of the year in L.A., and Gucci was among the first to co-sign her.

**Why not:** She’s still mentally scarred from Drake’s 2015 disaster set.

**Sampha**
**Drake — Odds: 2:1**
**Why:** He just dropped an album with Sampha on it and can’t go 10 minutes without trying to show how relevant he is.

**Why not:** Long weekend of “How to perfect the grime patois” vocal classes that he can’t get out of.

**Bon Iver**
**Kanye — Odds: 8:1**
**Why:** He’s been at Bon Iver’s winter cabin for the last two months and is super bored.

**Why not:** Might have to investigate Susan Rice for Trump.

**DJ Khaled**
**Every performer at Coachella + Drake — Odds: 11:10**
**Why:** For the Snapchat and the ‘Gram.

**Why not:** There is no why not. Dude doesn’t rap, sing or really even DJ.

**Father John Misty**
**A drug dealer he met the night before at Tenants of the Trees — Odds: 3:2**
**Why:** He seemed like a chill bro.

**Why not:** Couldn’t get him an artist wristband.

An L.A. native, Jeff Weiss edits Passion of the Weiss and hosts the Bizarre Ride show on RBMA Radio. Follow him on Twitter @passionweiss.
Amoeba Music’s discerning and knowledgeable musical experts (our staff) have put their collective heads & ears together to bring you a biased & unobjective collection of our favorite music & movies. Check out the list online at AMOEBA.COM or stop in and pick up a FREE book!

SALE ENDS 5/10/17
THE MUSIC IS LISTENING

I’m forgetting where I read this and I am paraphrasing, but Sun Ra once warned, “Be careful, the music is listening.”

I know that some judge others by their record collection. When asked “How many records do you have?” the answer obviously is “not enough,” but what can one tell about the collection (or the collector) by merely inquiring as to the amount of pieces contained therein? Is it the kind of size that matters? Not to me.

The reason I bring up the somewhat stern dictum from Ra is that quite often I feel as if I am being judged by my record collection. I sometimes feel peered into, as if an evaluation of my integrity and unbending adherence to completion is being measured.

Sometimes, I walk back and forth in front of a wall of my records, asking out loud, “What have I missed?! How am I failing you?” The silence is devastating but even as all in front of me remains motionless, a flaw makes its presence known.

The music is listening.

There is only one thing to do. I pull down all the different pressings I have of a particular album that has somehow transmitted to me my failure, load them all into an acid-free plastic container, take them to a large table and methodically run the pressing information of each LP against my notes and multiple internet sources to see exactly what I have.

Shouldn’t I just be listening to the record, and not worrying about the small lines of numbers on its label? I can understand why you might ask that. I’ve seen people like you, with your friends and your pets, going places on the weekends, your sparkling conversation filling the air with well-adjusted, mature and spirited effervescence. I don’t have that.

To ward off the slings and arrows of adults who toil in the real world is that I actually listen to these unimpeachable platters, which stand at the ready, perpetually primed to perform, no doubt feel the sting of my treachery, as guardian, custodian and curator. Even my defense team would regard me with disgust and soberly attest to my top-to-bottom failure as guardian, custodian and curator. Even my defense team would regard me with disgust and soberly attest to my top-to-bottom failure as guardian, custodian and curator. Even my defense team would regard me with disgust and soberly attest to my top-to-bottom failure as guardian, custodian and curator. Even my defense team would regard me with disgust and soberly attest to my top-to-bottom failure as guardian, custodian and curator.

Yes, I’m fully aware of how utterly ridiculous all of this is, and believe it or not, am able to separate myself from this insatiable hunger for acquisition to register the overwhelming absurdity of all this failing about. It is as close as I get to the idea of fun without fearing I am letting myself slip. Fanatic is as Fanatic does.
THU. APRIL 13
WEBSTER X
INJURY RESERVE AND DYLAN BRADY

THU. APRIL 13
OG MACO
DESPERADO TOUR

FRI. APRIL 14
GET DOWN LA

FRI. APRIL 14
UNION NIGHTCLUB
4067 W PICO BLVD

SAT. APRIL 15
BESS GULPH
EASTER BUNNY BASH

FRI. APRIL 14
SYNAPTIK EVENTS AND THE TABLE PRODUCTIONS PRESENT NICO LUMINOUS, SHERMGAYER, RHYTHMSTAR, PLIZ BEATS, AND NAUGHTY PRINCESS

SAT. APRIL 15
-bootie- LA
EASTER BUNNY BASH

COMING SOON:
4/13 UNDERGROUND RISING
4/14 FEEL GOOD
4/15 CALI GOT SOUL
4/16 THE MOTH
4/16 CABARET PARADISO
4/20 QUEEN TRIBUTE CONCERT
4/20 WEAREALAYA, IRL MUSIC AND DUSTERA PRESENTS
4/20 QUINTRAVERSITY
4/20 ORIGINS W/ LIVE PERFORMANCE BY WHYFI
4/21 LA RESISTENCIA
4/21 PERPETUAL DAWN / INTERSESSIONS - PLANNED PARENTHOOD BENEFIT PARTY
4/22 KILLAHURST
4/27 BALKIES BALL WITH EUREKA
4/28 HOSTILE
4/28 OLD SCHOOL STYLE FEATURING FESTER X OSCAR D GROUCH
4/29 ACXDC
4/29 NEW SCHOOL DAZE
4/29 DEAD HORSE TRAUMA
4/29 BHANGRA DE MAYO
4/29 SUPERSILLYUS
4/29 JESUS PIECE
4/29 DESPISE YOU AND COKE BUST SPLIT
4/29 7TH RECORD RELEASE
4/29 CLUB HOUSE
4/29 THE NEW DIVISION
4/29 URBAN STYLES
4/29 BOXERIA SUBURBANA
4/29 SADISTIC INTENT
4/29 CONFLICT
4/29 RAVEN FELIX
4/29 ACXDC
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4/29 SADISTIC INTENT
4/29 CONFLICT
4/29 RAVEN FELIX
4/29 NICE & SMOOTH, DANA DANE
4/29 BOOTIE LA
4/30 I DON’T DO CLUBS PRESENTS:
4/30 MUST LOVE BEARDS
4/30 GRAN BAILE
4/30 KARATE IN THE GARAGE TOUR
4/30 CLUB 90’S
4/30 BASS FOR BREASTS
4/30 THE POISONOUS TOUR
4/30 UNDERGROUND RISING
4/30 1FEST: LOS ANGELES 2017
4/30 CHRON GEN
4/30 WEST COAST AWARDS BALL
Coachella
@ EMPIRE POLO CLUB
When a pregnant Beyoncé — only the second woman, after Björk, ever selected to headline at Coachella — postponed her scheduled appearance at the fest until next year, the bookers at Goldenvoice reacted like savvy chess players, swiftly replacing the Lemonade queen with a similarly flashy pop diva, Lady Gaga. Although Gaga’s recent music doesn’t have the same emotional heft as Beyoncé’s, the former Stefani Germanotta should provide a suitably distracting spectacle when she appears on Saturday. Unlike in previous years, there are no major surprises — no dramatic reunions of such oft-rumored possibilities as The Smiths, Pink Floyd or The Kinks — as most of the bigger names (Radiohead, Bon Iver, Kendrick Lamar) are festival regulars. The highlights could easily come from such lower-billed performers as Chicano Batman, Tacocat and Thee Commons. Also Saturday-Sunday, April 15-16, and Friday-Sunday, April 21-23. — Falling James

Hans Zimmer
@ MICROSOFT THEATER
Award-winning composer Hans Zimmer has been the mastermind behind both longtime classic scores for such films as Thelma and Louise, True Romance and The Lion King and later classic scores for the likes of Inception, The Dark Knight series and 12 Years a Slave. Zimmer — whose composing catalog boasts more than 120 films — brings his inimitable work to the stage, a first in North America, for a one-of-a-kind experience. Presented in two parts, the first half is recognizable pieces from his earlier works, the second reinterpreted versions of his later compositions. During the latter, Zimmer will be joined by some of his high-profile collaborators. Considering this list includes Pharrell Williams and Johnny Marr, to mention just a couple, the mind boggles at the possibilities of who might step onstage. — Lily Moyer

Anthony Fung Trio featuring George Garzone
@ BLUEWHALE
George Garzone, native son of Boston, learned to play saxophone in back of a pizza parlor from his uncle Rocco, a swing-era musician who made a career move from swinging eighth notes to swinging dough. Garzone would stay close to home, continuing his education at the Berklee College of Music. After a brief stint with Tom Jones, Garzone returned to Berklee as a teacher, gradually becoming the most hallowed of saxophone gurus, mentoring future stars Mark Turner, Donny McCaslin, Joshua Redman and Branford Marsalis. Another Garzone disciple is drummer Anthony Fung, who moved on from Berklee to Los Angeles, winning a coveted spot in the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. Fung brings his former master out to California for some unfamiliar experiences, such as West Coast jazz, 80-degree April weather and gluten-free pizza. — Gary Fukushima

Marco Benevento, Wyndham, The Eagle Rock Gospel Singers
@ THE BOOTLEG
Although pianist Marco Benevento comes from the jazz and experimental-rock scenes and has worked in the past with Brad Mehldau and members of Phish, the music on his two most recent releases — The Story of Fred Short and the accompanying live release, Woodstock Sessions — is fairly straightforward, mainstream pop-rock that relies more on an easygoing charm than flashy musicianship. Such tunes as “Dropkick” and “In the Afternoon Tomorrow” exude a pleasantly escapist, laid-back vibe. Local singer-guitarist Wyndham (Elvis Perkins in Dearland, and a former touring member of Clap Your Hands Say Yeah) spins similarly mellow passages on his recent EP, Double You. Much of the fire tonight emanates from the Eagle Rock Gospel Singers, who pump up their traditionally rooted grooves with a more overtly passionate and harder-hitting approach. — Falling James

Ruthie Foster
@ MCCABE’S GUITAR SHOP
It’s hard to imagine how Ruthie Foster’s roof-raising voice will be contained by the little backroom that serves as the performance space at McCabe’s. “I want to be ready when joy comes back to me,” the Texas native wails above the strains of R&B and soul on the title track of her latest album, Joy Comes Back. In the past, quoting Maya Angelou, Foster has declared, “I’m not cute or built to suit fashion-model size,” but her voice is an awesome force of beauty in its own right. Amid the new album’s blues pleas and gospel exhortations, she surprises with a chilling reinvention of Black Sabbath’s “War Pigs,” which Foster has transformed into a dusty blues opus replete with anguished harmonic cries and her own wickedly slithering slide guitar. — Falling James

The Courtneys, Matt Lamkin, French Vanilla
@ RESIDENT
Canada’s Courtneys don’t quite make the power-pop the press suggests, but they definitely have lots of power. Their recent II (on Flying Nun) is Bandwagonesque-esque happy-sad (and noisy!) guitar rock with a heavy-duty rhythm section and just as many hard parts as hooks. Excellent support comes from the missed-but-mighty Soft Pack’s frontman, Matt Lamkin, who’s Where I’m Matt hit via Volar Records last fall. Think of it as R. Stevie Moore’s Warren Zevon album; it zigzags from new wave to post-punk to power-pop and hometaping with conviction and charm. And L.A.’s French Vanilla are a no-wave-y/post-punk-y L.A. outfit in the vein of The Bloos, Y Pants, PragVEC, even Pylon or The Raincoats — discord under control, as heard on a promising LP just out on Danger Collective. — Chris Ziegler
Hooks & Blow
@ WHISKY A GO-GO
Guns N’ Roses keyboardist Dizzy Reed doesn’t like to take a break, apparently. The mammoth Not In This Lifetime tour with his day job is merely pausing between stadium dates, so the guys could be forgiven for putting their feet up for five minutes. Not Reed. He’d rather play a few shows with his jam/cover band, Hooks & Blow, alongside Quiet Riot’s Alex Grossi, Type O Negative’s Johnny Kelly, W.A.S.P.’s Mike Duda, and whoever else happens to be available. As the name suggests, this isn’t an intricate prog-rock side project but rather an excuse to musically kick back and indulge in some big, dumb fun. Expect rock & roll covers (their “Saturday Night’s Alright for Fighting” was released as a single) and songs associated with the musicians’ main bands. — Brett Callwood

Tortoise
@ TERAGRAM BALLROOM
Chicago avant-rock collective Tortoise have spun a strange array of instrumental passages in their 27-year career; their latest release, The Catastrophist, is an unsettling amalgamation of disparate influences. The title track sounds like breezy light jazz, whereas “Shake Hands With Danger” lives up to its name with junkyard percussion and a hypnotic weave of bell-like tones hammered in place by heavy drums and bass. “Hot Coffee” and “Ox Duke” flirt with fizzy electronica, whereas “At Odds With Logic” is a low-key prog-rock soundscape that gives way to thunderous chords. The instrumentals are broken up with guest-vocal turns by Yo La Tengo’s Georgia Hubley (“Yonder Blue”) and Dead Rider’s Todd Rittmann (on a sludgy remake of David Essex’s “Rock On”). — Falling James

Mastodon
@ HOLLYWOOD PALLADIUM
Atlanta metal band Mastodon have carved a 15-year career out of mixing proggish psychedelics, sludgy power riffs and esoteric lyrical trips into one of the most consistent discographies in modern metal. The raw heaviness of their early work is long gone, but what the band have become is so much more vital to the current metal landscape than retreading past power. Mastodon’s newest record, Emperor of Sand, continues to see the band refine their barrages of riffs and mighty vocal bellows into tightly compacted compositions in which not a single note is wasted. There are still occasional forays into swirling storms of tower-toppling metal (most notably the shred-heavy “Roots Remain”), but for the most part, Mastodon have settled into a groove where they pack as many riffs as possible into every song. — Jason Roche
CAFE NELA:

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CLUBS

Homeshake, Tue., April 18, 8 p.m., $11. Dub Club 420

Atlass, Overwerk, Mon., April 17, 8:30 p.m., $13.

Crash Course in Science, All Your Sisters, Koban, DJ Branden Hutchins, Sat., April 15, 5 p.m., $10.

Grateful Shred, Thu., April 20, 8:30 p.m., $10.

April 18, 8:30 p.m., $12. Califone, Tara Jane O’Neil, Relationship, Cotillon, Ablebody, The Planters, Tue., DJ Kintaro, Mon., April 17, 8:30 p.m., free. The Wyndham, The Eagle Rock Gospel Singers, Sat., April 15, 8 p.m., TBA.

King Kang, The Relevant Elephants, Thu., April 20, 8

Bridges, Sat., April 15, 9 p.m., $58-$78.

8:45 p.m., free.

Bryant, Carmine Sardo, Ronnie Mack, Thursdays, 6:30 p.m., free; The Glen Roberts Big Band, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., free. Jimmy Angel, Sun., April 16, 7 p.m., $16-$35. The Brombies, free; Frank Fairfield, Meredith Axelrod, Tom Sauber, Debra Lee & Trigger Happy, Sundays, 6:30 p.m., $10. The Bryant Experience, Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m., free. Play'n Lucky, Fri., April 14, 7:30 p.m., free. The Cody Bryant Experience, Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m., free. Debra Lee & Trigger Happy, Sundays, 6:30 p.m., free; Frank Fairfield, Meredith Axelrod, Tom Sauber, Sat., April 15, 7 p.m., $16-$35. The Briea, broccoli, Thurs., April 13, 7:30 p.m., free; The Get Down Boys, Mon., April 17, 8 p.m., free. John Pisan’s Guitar Night, Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m., free; The Flight 584 Big Band, Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m., free. This Ain’t Your Daddy’s Big Band, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m., free. Jimmy Angel, Thursdays, 6:30 p.m., free; The Glen Roberts Big Band, Thursdays, 7 p.m., free; Jay Dee Maness, Cody Bryant, Cameron Sardo, Ronnie Mack, Thursdays, 8:45 p.m., free.

THE ECHO: 1822 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles. Kid Wave, Sudan Archives, Azael, Hydro Kittin, Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m., $9.50. Grand Ole Echo, with Kat Myers & the Buzzards, Sun., April 16, 7 p.m., free. Dreamings, Brass Box, Ever So Android, Dancing Tongues, Mon., April 17, 8:30 p.m., free. Blossoms, Arkells, Widerado, Tue., April 18, 8:30 p.m., $15.50. Triptides, The Creation Factory, Vinyl Williams, Supereet, Wed., April 19, 8 p.m., $9.50. Pond, Ezra Furman, Thurs., April 20, 8 p.m., $25.


THE FEDERAL BAR: 102 Pine Ave., Long Beach. Furcast, King Kang, The Relevant Elephants, Thu., April 20, 8 p.m., TBA.
Angeles. Paper Pilots, Banta, Jamie Sierota, Wed., April 19, 8 p.m., $10. Angeles. The Drawing Machine, Awarewolf, Jess Harnell, Sat., April 15, 7 p.m., free. Nicolas Iaros, Floating Points, Pond, Mon., April 17, 8 p.m., $39. Glass Animals, Jagwar Ma, Wed., April 19, 8 p.m., $38.50. Future Islands, Survive, Thu., April 20, 8 p.m., $32.50. (see Music Pick). The Troubadour, Tuesdays, 8-10 p.m., $5. Sun., April 16, 9 p.m., $5. Downtown Boys, Girl Crass, Choice Reef & Mie, High Sun, Sat., April 15, 9 p.m., $5. The Beat Jackers, VerBS, Clive, OneWerd, 9 p.m., free. The Sunday Band, Sundays, 7:30 p.m., free. Open Mic, hosted by Keri Kelsey, Sun., April 16-15, 9 p.m., $10. Open Mic, free. The Readys, Sundays, 9 p.m.-midnight, free. The Monday Night Jam, Mondays, 9:30 p.m., $20. Monday Night Jammmz, Mondays, 9:30 p.m., $20. Skye Renee, Thu., April 20, 7:30 p.m., $15. Trap'Trella, Fri., April 14, 9 p.m., $20. Whyfi, Abby, DJ Clue, 9 p.m., free. The Jerry Vivino All-Star Jazz Band, Wed., April 14, 7 p.m., $20. The GRANADA LA: 17 S. First St., Alhambra. Salsa & Bachata Tuesdays, Thursdays, 9:30 p.m.-3 a.m., $15. Salsa & Bachata Tuesdays, Thursdays, 9:30 p.m.-3 a.m., $15. Bachata Thursdays, Thursdays, 8 p.m., $5-$10. TIA CHUCIA'S CENTRAL CULTURAL & BOOKSTORE: 13157 A Gladstone Ave., Sylmar. Open mic, Fridays, 8-10 p.m. URBAN PRESS WINERY: 316 N. San Fernando Blvd., Burbank. El Igwoamento, Sat., April 15, 8 p.m., $10. —Falling James
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Thursday • April 13th • 6 PM
THE BUTTERTONES
Their new album, Gravedigging comes out on Innovative Leisure March 31st. Catch their live set and get your CD or LP signed by the band after the show.

Saturday • April 22nd
RECORD STORE DAY!
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Monday • April 24th • 5 PM
SYLVAN ESSO
Sylvan Esso celebrate their eagerly anticipated sophomore album, What Now (out 4/28 on Loma Vista Records), with a live performance at Amoeba. Purchase the album at Amoeba on 4/24 for admission to this special event!

Thursday • April 27th • 6 PM
THE SLOTHS
L.A. Sunset Strip garage rockers The Sloths return with their new album, Back From The Grave (Lollipop Records/Burger Records).

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MONDAY, APRIL 17

BANKS & STEELZ: With Zipper Club, 8:30 p.m. El Rey Theatre, 3515 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles.

BONobo: With The Range, 9 p.m., $35. The Theatre at Ace Hotel, 929 S. Broadway, Los Angeles.

CAR SEAT HEADREST: With Preoccupations, 8 p.m., $23.50. The Regent Theater, 448 S. Main St., Santa Barbara.

CHEESE & CAMBRIA: With The Dear Hunter, 8 p.m., $32.50. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana.

TUESDAY, APRIL 18

GARY WILSON & THE BLIND DATES: 7 p.m., TBA.
Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood.

LITTLE DRAGON: With Goldlink, 8 p.m., $37.25. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana.

PHANTOGRAM: 8:30 p.m. Arlington Theatre, 1317 State St., Santa Barbara.

TWIN PEAKS, HINDS: With The Memories, 8 p.m., $20. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana.

LOCAL NATIVES: With Tennis, 8 p.m. Fox Theater Pomona, 301 S. Garey Ave., Pomona.

NAO: With Brasstracks, 8 p.m., $25. The Mayan, 1038 S. Hill St., Los Angeles.

NAV: 11 p.m., $35. The Observatory.

SONDER: 8 p.m., $20. Hollywood Forever Cemetery, 6000 S. Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles.

SURVIVE: With M. Geddes Gengras, Sleeperhold, 8:30 p.m. El Rey Theatre, 3515 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles.

TACOCAT: With The Regrettes, in the Constellation Room, 9 p.m. The Observatory.

TAJ EXPRESS: THE BOLLYWOOD MUSICAL REVUE: 8 p.m., $37.89-$57. Valley Performing Arts Center, 18111 Northhoff St., Northridge.

TROPI CORILLO: 12 p.m., free. Wells Fargo History Museum, 333 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles.

THURSDAY, APRIL 20

THE CHRIS ROBINSON BROTHERHOOD: 8 p.m., $35. Ventura Theater, 26 S. Chestnut St., Ventura.

MARSHMELLO: 5 p.m., $44.50. Fox Theater Pomona, 301 S. Garey Ave., Pomona.

MASTODON: With Eagles of Death Metal, Russian Circles, 6:30 p.m., $37.50. Hollywood Palladium, 6215 W. Sunset Blvd, See Music Pick.

MODERN: With Hypoxia, Robert Koch, 9 p.m., $34.50. The Mayan, 1038 S. Hill St., Los Angeles. See Music Pick.

ROYGOFF: With Marcus Marr, 9 p.m., $29.50. The Novo by Microsoft, 800 W. Olympic Blvd.

THE SMOKERS CLUB 420: With Joey Badass, Lil Uzi Vert, Flatbush Zombies, Suicideboys, Playboi Carti, A$AP Giobbo, Rob Stone, CJ Fly, Squidnice, 4 p.m., $60. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd.

SNOOP DOGG: With Wiz Khalifa, Cypress Hill, 6 p.m., $29.50-$150. The Greek Theatre, 2700 N. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles.

SOFI TUKKER: 9 p.m., $18. The Observatory.

STATE CHAMPS: With Against the Current, With Confidence, Don Broco, 7 p.m., $19.99. The Yost Theater, 307 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana.

WHITNEY: With Dent May, 9 p.m. El Rey Theatre.

XAVIER WULF: With Idontknowjeffrey, Black Smurf, Tass, Eddy Baker, 11 p.m., $15. The Observatory.

—Falling James
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Public Notices

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME
Case No. LS0291952 Superior Court of California County of Los Angeles located at: Los Angeles Superior Court, North West District - East Building 6350 Sylmar Avenue, Room 107, Van Nuys, CA 91401. Filed on 03/07/17. In the matter of petitioner ANASTASIA GAPONENKO. It is hereby ordered that all persons interested in the above-mentioned matter of change of name appear before the above-entitled court as follows to show cause why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Court Date 4/25/17, at 10:00 am. Located at Central Courthouse 111 North Hill Street, Department 44, Room 418, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

And a petition for change of name having been duly filed with the clerk of the court, it appearing from said petition that said petitioner desires to have her name changed from: Shahram, Sebastian, Shahbal, to: Mirnash Shahram Kachani.

Now therefore, it is hereby ordered that all persons interested in the said matter of change of name appear as indicated herein above and there to show cause why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Court Date 4/25/17, at 10:00 am, located at Central Court House 111 North Hill Street, Department 44, Room 418, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

A petition for change of name having been duly filed with the clerk of the court, and it appearing from said petition that said petitioner(s) desires to have her name changed from: Shahram, Sebastian, Shahbal, to: Mirnash Shahram Kachani.

Now therefore, it is hereby ordered that all persons interested in the said matter of change of name appear as indicated herein above and there to show cause why the petition for change of name should not be granted. It is further ordered that a copy of this order be published in the LA Weekly, a newspaper of general circulation for the County of Los Angeles, once a week for four (4) successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing of said petition. Set to publish 5/25/17, 6/1/17, 6/8/17, 6/15/17.

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